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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE DRAMATIC FUNCTION OF ORCHESTRATION IN GIUSEPPE VERDI'S OTELLO

by

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF MUSIC

IN

MUSICOLOGY

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1980

17.ª Rappresen.

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Musica di **GIUSEPPE VERDI**

Proprietà Casa Ricordi

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JAGO, alfiere	.	ANDREI, VITTORIO
CASSIO, capo di squadra	.	PAOLI GIOVANNI
RODRIGO, gentiluomo veneziano	.	ROSSARI TEODORO
LODOVICO, ambasciatore della Repubblica Veneta	.	BATTAGLIA FILIPPO
MONTANO, predecessore d'Otello nel governo dell'Isola di Cipro	.	LEONCI ADOLFO
Un ARALDO	.	LACCHEZZINI ANGELO
DESDEMONA, moglie d'Otello	.	Sig.ra PANTALEONI ADELINA
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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptence, a thesis entitled "The Dramatic Function of Orchestration in Giuseppe Verdi's Otello" submitted by David Speers in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Music in Musicology.

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Date August 29, 1980

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to discuss and analyze Verdi's use of orchestral techniques to illuminate and reinforce the dramatic considerations of his opera Otello.

The first chapter deals with the historical background of the work, including the events surrounding the planning of the opera, the preparation of the libretto, the composition, and the first production in 1887.

Chapter Two is a general survey of Verdi's use of the orchestra for dramatic emphasis from his first opera Oberto, Conte di San Bonifacio (1837) to his final creation Falstaff (1893).

The Third Chapter is a detailed examination of Verdi's Otello from the aspect of the composer's use of the orchestra to support and emphasize the dramatic moments in the work. The opera is examined act by act in detailed narration, supported by a selection of musical examples.

It is the contention of the writer that Otello is Verdi's supreme masterpiece and possibly the greatest of all Romantic operas. This opinion is based largely on Verdi's ability to apply orchestral devices and techniques which support and intensify the dramatic development of the opera.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Following the Cairo premiere of Aida in December of 1871 and the first Italian production of that work at La Scala in February of the next year, Giuseppe Verdi faded into what most observers considered to be a well-deserved and permanent retirement from operatic composition. Indeed, it seemed that the composer, although only fifty-eight years old, was content to slip quietly from the musical scene and live out his last years as a gentleman-farmer on his country estate at Sant'Agata.

It is unlikely that any serious thought of composing another major work had even occurred to Verdi before 1873. The death of the great Italian writer and patriot Alessandro Manzoni on May 22 of that year, however, prompted Verdi's return to work. The resulting Requiem, first performed in Milan on the first anniversary of Manzoni's death, was a work of obvious dramatic and even operatic proportions. The masterly dramatic utilization of the orchestra, even more advanced and innovative than in its predecessors Don Carlo and Aida, raised speculation that an opera of similar music-drama dimensions was imminent.

Following a triumphant European tour of the Requiem, however, Verdi returned to Sant'Agata believing his career as a composer to be at an end. During the thirty-seven years that had passed since

Oberto, he had given the operatic world twenty-four works; after Aida, he felt neither the desire nor the obligation to write again. A letter dated March 11, 1875, to his close friend and benefactress Countess Clarina Maffei reflects this attitude.

> Are you right when you speak of my conscientious obligation to write? No, no. You are joking, because you know better than I do that the account is balanced. That is to say, I have always conscientiously carried out the undertaking I entered into; the public has met me equally conscientiously, with sincere hisses, applause, etc. So nobody has the right to complain, and I repeat once more: the account is balanced.[1]

It was not until June of 1879 that there appeared any serious indication that Verdi was perhaps considering a return to operatic composition. In Milan to conduct a performance of the Requiem in memory of the victims of the Po Valley flood, Verdi entertained his associate and long-time friend, publisher Giulio Ricordi and the conductor, Franco Faccio[2] at his residence in the Albergo Milano. During the course of the evening, the discussion turned to possible operatic subjects, in particular Shakespeare and Othello. Ricordi insisted that the play would be a worthy vehicle

---

[1] "Ma dite davvero dell'obbligo di coscienza di scrivere? No, no. Voi scherzate perchè sapete meglio di me che le partite sono saldate. Vale a dire che io ho sempre soddisfatti gli impegni presi con tutta coscienza: il pubblico gli ha accolti egualmente con tutta coscienza, con buoni fischi, od applausi ecc. Nissuno dunque ha diritto di lagnarsi e ripeto ancora: Partita saldata." The above translation is by this writer. See Gaetano Cesari and Alessandro Luzio, ed., I Copialettere di Giuseppe Verdi (Milan: Stucchi Ceretti, 1913), p. 510.

[2] Faccio (1840-91) was himself the composer of a Shakespearian opera, Amletto (1865), with a libretto by Boito. He was the leading Italian operatic conductor of his day, and in 1871, he became the principal conductor at La Scala, where he conducted the first performances of Aida and Otello, as well as the first Italian performances of a Wagner opera, Lohengrin.

for a new opera by Verdi. The publisher was anxious to have the composer collaborate with the young Italian librettist and composer, Arrigo Boito.[3]

Verdi was by no means unfamiliar with Boito's work. In 1862, he had commissioned the twenty-year-old writer to set the text for his short patriotic cantata Inno delle nazioni which was intended for Italian representation at the opening of the London Exhibition the following year.[4] Shortly after, however, relations between Verdi and the young librettist had become strained. Boito had written and subsequently published a poem entitled All'Arte italiana ("Concerning Italian Art") in which he referred critically to the sad state of Italian music since Pergolesi and Marcello.[5]

---

[3] Boito (1842-1918) had already provided the libretto for Amilcare Ponchielli's La Gioconda (1876) under the anagrammatic pseudonym, Tobia Gorrio and for Faccio's Amletto in 1865. His own opera Mefistofele was premiered at La Scala in 1868, but met with a poor reception. A considerably revised production in Bologna in 1875 proved highly successful.

[4] Hostile political factions within Italy rejected the work as unsuitable for representation at the Exhibition. Instead, the premiere was given at Her Majesty's Theater, London, on May 24, 1862.

[5] "Forse già nacque chi sovra l'altare Rizzera l'arte, verecondo e puro, Su quel'altar bruttato come un muro Di lupanare." ("Perhaps the man is already born who, modest and pure, will restore art to its altar stained like a brothel wall.") Quoted and translated in Charles Osborne, The Complete Operas of Verdi: A Critical Guide (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1969); reprint edition (London: Pan Books, 1973), p. 446.

Verdi, being the most prominent Italian musician of his day, took the poem as a personal insult.

In 1879, however, Boito, now thirty-seven and wiser for his years, had come to recognize Verdi as a true musical genius. Reluctantly, Verdi agreed to meet with Boito and Faccio to discuss the proposed opera. Three days later, Boito presented the composer with a scenario for an opera based on the Othello theme. Verdi read the sketch and was pleased. Though refusing to commit himself, he urged Boito to write a complete libretto on the subject. With the young writer enthusiastically at work, Verdi returned to Sant'Agata. It was there, while reading the Ricordi publication Gazzetta Musicale di Milano, that he came across an excerpt from the memoirs of sculptor Giovanni Duprè quoting Rossini as having said that Verdi, being of somber and tragic disposition, would never be capable of composing a successful comic opera. His feelings hurt, Verdi wrote to Giulio Ricordi:

> I have read in your paper Duprè's words on our meeting, and the sentence pronounced by Jupiter Rossini (as Meyerbeer called him). But just a moment. For the last twenty years I have been searching for an opera buffa libretto, and now that I may have found it you print an article that will encourage the public to damn the work before it is even written, thus prejudicing my interests and yours. But

have no fear. If by chance, misfortune or destiny, despite the Great Sentence, my evil genius drives me to write this opera buffa, I repeat you need have no fear...I shall ruin some other publisher.[6]

Ricordi was understandably alarmed at the possibility of losing Verdi to another publishing house, and he was bewildered over the mention of a comic opera. He had believed that the aging composer had no plans for further composition except, possibly, for the Othello project.[7] In an attempt to pacify Verdi, Ricordi suggested that he and "a friend" visit the composer at his estate.

Verdi's reply was characteristically witty and suspicious:

A visit from you with a friend, who would of course be Boito, will always be a pleasure. But on this subject let me speak very clearly and frankly. A visit from him would commit me too definitely, and I wish absolutely to avoid committing myself. You know how this "Chocolate Project" came into being. You and Faccio dined with me. We spoke about Othello. We spoke of Boito. The next day, Faccio brought Boito to me at the hotel. Three days later, Faccio brought me his Otello scenario which I read and liked. "Write the libretto," I told

---

[6]"Ho letto sulla vostra Gazzetta le parole di Duprè sul primo nostro incontro, e la sentenza di Giove Rossini (come lo chiamava Meyerbeer). Ma guardate un po...Ho cercato per vent'anni un libretto d'opera buffa, ed ora che l'ho si può dir trovato, voi, con quell'articolo, mettete in corpo del pubblico una voglia matta di fischiarmi l'opera anche prima di essere scritta, rovinando così i miei ed i vostri interessi. Ma niente paura. Se per caso, per disgrazia, per fatalità malgrado la Gran Sentenza, il mio cattivo genio mi trascinasse a scrivere quest'opera buffa, niente paura, ripeto...Ruinerò un altro editore." See Cesari and Luzio, I Copialettere, pp. 308-9.

[7]The comic subject in question may have been Molière's Tartuffe which Verdi had discussed with librettist Camille du Locle just before the composition of Aida. Du Locle had, in fact, prepared a scenario on the subject in French which Verdi had kept.

him. "It will come in handy for you, for me, or for someone else." If you come here now with Boito, I shall have to read the finished libretto he will bring with him. If I find it completely satisfactory, then I am somewhat committed to it. If I like it, but suggest modifications which he accepts, then I am even more committed. If, however good it is, I don't like it, it would be difficult to say so to his face. No, no, you have gone too far[8] and must stop before there is any gossip or unpleasantness.

Nevertheless, Boito's completed libretto was in Verdi's hands by Christmas of 1879. The composer was very favorably impressed but was still reluctant to commit himself to the opera. Instead, he purchased the libretto and filed it away beside Antonio Somma's Re Lear, which had been left undisturbed for some thirty years.

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[8]"Sarà sempre cosa gradita una vostra visita con un amico (che sarebbe Boito, s'intende) ma permettetemi che su quest'argomento vi parli molto chiaro. Una sua visita mi impegnerebbe troppo. Voi sapete come nacque questo progetto di cioccolatta. Pranzavate meco con Faccio. Si parlò d'Otello, si parlò di Boito. Il giorno dopo Faccio mi porto Boito; tre giorni dopo Boito mi portò lo schizzo d'Otello. Lo lessi e lo trovai buono. Dissi, fatene la poesia, sarà buona per voi, per me, per un altro. Ora venendo con Boito, bisogna che io legga il libretto. O io lo trovo completamente buono, voi me lo lasciate, ed io mi trovo in certo modo impegnato. O io, anche trovandolo buono, suggerisco qualche modificazione che Boito accetta, ed io mi trovo impegnato ancora di più. O non mi piace, e sarebbe troppo duro che io gli dicessi in muso quest'opinione. No, no! Voi siete andato già troppo avanti, e bisogna ora fermarsi prima che nascano pettegolezzi o disgusti." See Cesari and Luzio, I Copialettere, p. 311.

Late in 1879, Verdi again began to compose. By November, he had completed an Ave Maria for soprano and string orchestra and a Pater Noster for chorus and orchestra, both commissioned by the Milan Orchestral Society for performance the following year.

Early in 1880, the composer went to Paris to supervise the first French production of Aida, and by the time he returned to Milan in March, the ever-scheming Ricordi had devised another plan for bringing Verdi and Boito together. He suggested revising Simon Boccanegra which had been produced only infrequently since its premiere in Venice in 1857. Verdi was interested, and Boito, recognizing the collaboration as a possible stepping stone to the Othello project, set about repairing the patchwork libretto of Francesco Maria Piave. Within six months, the revision was complete. The premiere was given at La Scala on March 24, 1881, to overwhelming response. More important, however, was the fact that during the months in which they had worked together, Verdi and Boito had frequently discussed Othello, and it now seemed that both men took their collaboration on the "Chocolate Project" for granted.

It was not until three years later, however, that Verdi

began the mammoth task of composing Otello, in March of 1884.[9] No sooner had the composition begun, however, than the entire project almost came to a sudden and unfortunate end. Boito was in Naples for a production of his Mefistofele at the Teatro San Carlo. At a dinner reception following the opening performance, Boito had said something to his neighbor at the table which was partially overheard by a local journalist who misreported the statement to the effect that Boito had been unhappy providing the Iago libretto for Verdi and now that it was completed, he regretted not being able to compose the opera himself. Verdi read the report, was hurt and indignant, and, through a letter to Faccio, offered to return the libretto to Boito as a gift.

> The worst of it is that by regretting he cannot set it to music himself, Boito creates the impression that he does not expect me to be able to set it the way he would like it. I admit this possibility. I admit it completely, and so I ask you, as Boito's oldest and best friend, to tell him when he returns to Milan, not in writing but by

---

[9] At the beginning of the project, the proposed title of the opera was to have been Iago to distinguish it from Rossini's Otello (1816) and to indicate where the dramatic center of gravity of the work was eventually to be found. It was not until 1886 that Verdi wrote to Ricordi stating, "Iago was the demon who set everything in motion. Otello is the one who acts, who loves, who is jealous, who kills, and kills himself." Comparison with Rossini no longer bothered him. He would rather have people say, "He wanted to challenge a giant and failed" than "He wanted to hide behind the title Iago." See Spike Hughes, Famous Verdi Operas (New York: Chilton Book Company, 1968), p. 427.

> word of mouth, that I am ready, without resentment or regret, to give the manuscript back to him.[10]

Warned by Faccio and Ricordi, Boito wrote to Verdi immediately, assuring him that the report had been completely false.

> This theme and my libretto are yours by right of conquest. You alone can set Otello to music. All the creations you have given us speak this truth.[11]

Verdi accepted the explanation of the incident and friendly relations between he and Boito were resumed. He made no promises, however, to continue his work on the Otello score, complaining that he was too old and that no one really cared if he wrote again or not.

The turning point came in May of 1884 when Boito sent Verdi the revised text to Iago's "Credo." The composer had been unhappy with the scene in the second act written in penta-syllabic line and requested a style less lyrical and freer in

---

[10]"Il peggio si è che Boito, rammaricandosi di non poterlo musicare lui stesso, fa naturalmente suppore, com'egli non isperasse vederlo da me musicato com'egli vorrebbe. Ammetto perfettamente questo, lo ammetto completamente, ed è perciò che io mi rivolgo a voi, al più antico, al più saldo amico di Boito, affinchè quando ritornerà a Milano gli diciate a voce, non in inscritto, che io senz'ombra di risentimento, senza rancore di sorta gli rendo intatto il suo manoscritto." See Cesari and Luzio, I Copialettere, p. 324.

[11]"Questa tema e il mio libretto sono tuoi a rigore di conquista. Tu solamente puoi fare Otello musicato. Tutti degli creazioni dateci parlano questa verità." Quoted in Piero Nardi, Vita di Arrigo Boito (Verona: Hondadori, 1942), p. 494.

form. Boito's new "evil Credo"--unsymmetrical and in broken metre—delighted Verdi, and he called Boito to Sant'Agata late in September for three days of discussions. On December 9, Boito received the message he had been waiting for:

> Dear Boito,
>
> It seems impossible, and yet it is true!!
> I am busy. I am writing!!
>
> G. Verdi[12]

The Otello score was written in three relatively short sessions of composition: the first in March of 1884, previous to the Naples incident; the second and most productive at Genoa from December, 1884 to April, 1885; and the final session at Sant'Agata from the middle of September to early October of 1885.[13] Boito was at Verdi's complete disposal, a good many of the textual problems of the opera being settled verbally at frequent meetings at Sant'Agata and Genoa. The scoring of the opera, along with some significant revisions in the first act, occupied almost another entire year. While Verdi toiled over the final details

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[12] Translated in Franz Werfel and Paul Stefan, ed., Verdi: The Man in his Letters (New York: L.B. Fischer Publishing, 1942), p. 245.

[13] See Frank Walker, The Man Verdi (London: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1962), p. 493.

of his orchestration, Boito busied himself searching for a suitable Desdemona and discussing costume and scenery possibilities with the designer Edel. In September, he embarked on a French translation of the third and fourth acts, while his friend du Locle began work on the first two acts.

On November 1, 1886, Boito received a short note from Verdi, announcing the completion of Otello.

Caro Boito,

È finito!
Salute a noi...(ed anche a Lui!!)

Addio,

G. Verdi[14]

Despite this proclamation, it seems that the composer found it necessary to revise the score further. In a letter dated December 18, 1886, Verdi acknowledges receipt of a two-line revision of the text for the end of Iago's Act II serenade.

Verdi went to Milan early in January of 1887 to supervise the rehearsals of Otello. A blanket of secrecy was thrown over the proceedings. The rehearsals were absolutely closed to any observers and, through his contract with the theater, Verdi had reserved the right to cancel the production even after the final dress rehearsal. The cast included Francesco Tamagno as Otello,

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[14] See Cesari and Luzio, I Copialettere, p. 700.

Romilda Pantaleoni as Desdemona, the great French baritone Victor Maurel as Iago,[15] Giovanni Paroli as Cassio, Ginerva Petrovitch as Emilia, and Francesco Navarrini as Montano. Faccio conducted the premiere at La Scala on February 5, 1887.

While critical accounts of the first performance were cautious, public reaction to the new opera was near frenzy. Blanche Roosevelt, an American singer and writer who was in Milan for the event, wrote a humorous account of the Otello premiere:

> The scenery, costumes, and orchestra were nearly perfect; the cast was certainly weak. Victor Maurel is the only real artist in the opera, and he is a Frenchman. In voice, acting, appearance, and dress he is the ideal of what an operatic artist should be, and the ideal of what any operatic Iago could be. He sang as even his best friends never dreamed he could sing, and his acting was the consummate work which we always have at his artistic hands. He entered at once into the fullest sympathies of the audience, and I could not help then and there contrasting the Iagos we have seen in other countries with the Iagos we always see in Italy. Iago even seems a persona grata to the public; the qualities which raise a thrill of horror in the righteous Anglo-Saxon are received by this susceptible nation with placid contentment and relief. His vileness, ruses, and perfidy are accepted for their art, not their nature; his ingenious devices arouse heart-felt plaudits, and let me add that never will you hear a gallery god in Italy express any disapprobation with a successful knave. Had Iago not succeeded there is every reason to believe that Othello would be left out of the Italian Shakespearian repertory. On noting his more than prominence in this opera, rendered doubly so by Maurel's sublime creation, I could well understand Boito's and Verdi's inclination to call their work Iago, and not Othello. Iago is essentially Italian, not in the sense of vice, but of artistic villainy: he reasons from the personal standpoint, and his reasons find a universal echo in the land which gave

---

[15] Maurel, renowned for his singing and acting ability, also created Falstaff at Verdi's request in 1893.

birth to such a student of human nature as Macchiavelli. Othello, you will see, is an inferior creature, and plays an inferior part.

Maurel will be well remembered as one of the most gifted artists we have ever seen at Covent Garden. His Iago ranks with Nilsson's Ophelia—to my mind the finest lyric creation on the operatic stage. His elegance, grace, subtlety, and exquisite style in Iago find their most perfect expression. I need not refer to his appearance, the beau-ideal of a handsome Venetian, whose years are but "four times seven" and whose graces in this artist's hands are the climax of elegance and histrionic art. But you will see him in London, and I am sure will allow that you have never witnessed or heard anything to equal his impersonation of this part. Tamagno, the tenor, looked and acted Othello, but he did not sing—he bleated. Desdemona has never been a favorite of mine in history, and the present exponent of the role suggested to me all my thousand unavenged wrongs laid at the door of Brabantio's daughter. Madame Pantaleoni is an excellent person, but as Desdemona she ought to have been suppressed the night before at her dress rehearsal. Her voice is naturally fine and dramatic, but she has no more knowledge of the pure art of singing than I have of the real science of astronomy. She has a vile emission of tone in the medium open notes; the upper notes are clear, but rarely in tune. The lovely music assigned to Othello's wife must have splendid resisting powers not to have fallen flat in her hands or throat. In appearance Madame Pantaleoni is like-wise unfortunate: she is short, slightly cross-eyed, and of a physical plainness, which dwarfed the already insignificant Desdemona. She acted very well in the first and third acts, but not so well in the last. Of the other singers, I will add that Petrovitch as Emilia was deservedly hooted; V. Fornari as Roderigo was not important enough to help or hinder the work; and M. Paroli as Cassio was a really fair second tenor; he, at least, knows how to sing, but Nature evidently never intended him to sing at La Scala.

The ovations to Verdi and Boito reached the climax of enthusiasm. Verdi was presented with a silver album filled with the autographs and cards of every citizen in Milan. He was called out twenty times, and at the last calls hats and handkerchiefs were waved, and the house rose in a body. The emotion was something indescribable, and many wept. Verdi's carriage was dragged by citizens to the hotel. He was toasted and serenaded; and at five in the morning I had not closed my eyes in sleep for the crowds still singing

> and shrieking "Viva Verdi! viva Verdi!" Who shall say that this cry will not re-echo all over the world? At seventy-four this second conqueror may well exclaim: Veni, vidi, vici, Verdi![16]

Otello was first performed in the United States at the New York Academy of Music on April 16, 1888 with Francesco Marconi as the Moor, Eva Tetrazzini as Desdemona, and Antonio Galassi as Iago. Cleofonte Campanini conducted. The first London production occurred at the Lyceum on July 5, 1889, conducted by Faccio with a cast that included Tamagno and Maurel. Otello was first presented in Paris on the twelfth of October, 1894, when, much to Verdi's disgust, he was obliged to insert a ballet into Act III between the Otello-Iago-Cassio trio and the finale.

At the age of seventy-four, sixteen years after he had supposedly given the world his final operatic creation in Aida, Verdi had proven that his musical genius was not only still very much alive, but that it had grown to incomparable dramatic and technical dimensions.

Historians generally acknowledge Otello as the greatest of Italian Romantic operas. In it, Verdi achieves the music-drama concept which he had begun to develop forty years earlier in Macbeth. He had successfully combined text and music into one entity with a single purpose--the dramatic revelation of the plot.

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[16]Blanche Roosevelt, Verdi: Milan and "Othello" (London: Ward and Downey, 1887), p. 32-33.

This trend towards drama in Italian opera did not originate with Verdi, but rather developed from the operas of Mozart, Rossini, Donizetti, and Bellini. Rossini's early retirement from composition and the premature deaths of both Bellini and Donizetti kept them from achieving the prominence necessary to shape operatic trends. Verdi, however, after a career of fifty years, had created a work in which the music was continuous with lyrical moments arising from the drama almost imperceptibly.

Verdi's Otello is also typically Romantic in two very important literary aspects. First, the entire motivation of the drama is based upon emotion rather than reason. Second, the opera utilizes nature as a backdrop to human drama, as observed in the scenes of storm, fire, and evening calm in the first act.

A Romantic theme recurring in many of Verdi's operas also has its finest illustration in Otello—that being "that man can be immensely noble and, because of it, suffer a terrible fate."[17]

Many critics and observers accused Verdi of adopting Wagnerian techniques and principles in his Otello score. On the contrary, however, he had devised a music-drama that was wholly Italian in style. Otello utilizes the same Italian operatic inventions used to excess by Rossini, Donizetti, Bellini, and the young Verdi himself—the storm scene, the drinking song, the

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[17] See George Martin, Verdi: His Music, Life and Times (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1963), p. 530.

victory chorus, the vengeance aria, and the furtive prayer scene. In this instance, however, they are so much a part of the character and drama of the piece that they are not obtrusive to the continuity.

It must be recognized, too, that Otello, in the true Italian tradition, is still a singer's opera, not in the sense of the highly ornate bel canto works of the early nineteenth century, but rather in respect to the dramatic strength carried in the vocal lines. Even in sections of dialogue, the drama is sung rather than being musically spoken, a style adopted by many German composers of the day.

In Otello, Verdi's Italianate melodies are supported by a highly advanced and expanded orchestral technique. The work, in fact, represents the culmination of Verdi's orchestration. Through it he achieves a powerful dramatic and musical expression that had been developing from the very outset of his career. The following chapters will examine in detail the evolution of Verdi's orchestral technique and the manner in which he utilized that technique for dramatic effect.

CHAPTER II

THE EVOLUTION OF VERDI'S ORCHESTRAL TECHNIQUE

> Orchestral music since Beethoven has undergone its greatest developments chiefly at the hands of composers who contemplated music from the standpoint of the theater. It is true that Liszt wrote nothing for the theater, and that Berlioz's operas were brilliant failures; but the fact remains that nearly everything that marks an advance in nineteenth-century orchestral technique since Beethoven is an advance in essentially dramatic orchestration and this is in the narrow sense that the characteristic orchestral discoveries would be even more useful in an opera than in a purely symphonic work.[1]

The importance of opera in the history of orchestration cannot be overestimated. Many instruments and instrumental devices entered the realm of absolute music through the operatic door. Monteverdi, for instance, invented both the pizzicato and the string tremolo effects to depict the sounds of battle in his hybrid opera Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda in 1624.[2]

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[1] Francis Tovey, Essays in Musical Analysis, Vol. II (London: Oxford Press, 1935), p. 9.

[2] Adam Carse, The History of Orchestration (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., Ltd., 1925); reprint edition (New York: Dover Publications, 1964), pp. 47-48.

Alessandro Scarlatti brought the horn into the orchestra for the first time in his opera Tigrane (1715).[3] Except for a single isolated instance—a 1720 Mass by the Belgian composer J.A.J. Faber preserved in Antwerp Cathedral—the modern clarinet was unused as an orchestral instrument until Rameau's opera Acante et Céphise in 1751.[4] The English horn, greatly utilized in the Baroque opera and oratorio orchestra, had fallen into disuse until 1808 when it was reintroduced to the orchestra in a ballet score, Alexandre chez Apelle by the French composer Charles-Simon Catel. From that time on, the instrument appears in nearly every French operatic and symphonic score of the nineteenth century.[5] The trombone had been used in the theater almost since the beginnings of opera. Its first appearance in symphonic literature, however, was not until more than two hundred years later in the finale of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony in 1807.[6]

These few examples serve to illustrate the debt that modern orchestration technique owes to operatic and theatrical composition. It is significant, also, that, in each of the three

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[3]Donald Grout, A Short History of Opera, 2nd edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), p. 178.

[4]Cecil Forsyth, Orchestration, 2nd edition (London: The MacMillan Press, 1935), p. 271.

[5]Ibid., pp. 220-226.

[6]John Owen Ward, ed., The Oxford Companion to Music, 10th edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 1046-1047.

countries of musical dominance, the culmination of nineteenth-century orchestration occurs in the hands of predominantly operatic composers. In France, where a simple and delicate orchestral sonority had developed in reaction to the musical and cultural excesses of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic periods, Hector Berlioz had come to represent the pinnacle of both practical and theoretical orchestration. In Germany, Richard Wagner had taken that country's natural affinity for counterpoint and orchestral specialization and produced his music-dramas in which the orchestra relates and explains the drama in lush, extravagant textures.

Twenty-five years after the parallel developments in France and Germany, nineteenth-century Italian orchestration technique culminated in the late operas of Giuseppe Verdi. This late development was due, in part, to the complacency of the Italians in their position as the undisputed leaders in vocal composition and, also, to the notoriously low standard of orchestral playing in that country.[7]

Two of the major aspects of Romantic music were the increasing importance of texture in musical expression and the heightened meaning given to the accompaniment in vocal music.

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[7] Francis Irving Travis, Verdi's Orchestration (Zurich: Juris, 1956), p. 14.

Paul Henry Lang, in his Music in Western Civilization, states that, "The promotion of sonority to an element of inspiration is perhaps the most important single factor in musical romanticism.[8] In his comprehensive study on romantic music, the eminent German musicologist Alfred Einstein noted that, "...both in song and in opera, the Romantics had altered the significance of the role which the accompaniment played in relation to the vocal parts."[9] Both of these aspects are evident in Verdi's work, and because he composed almost exclusively in the operatic genre, texture and accompanimental considerations involve orchestral qualities.

This chapter traces the development of Verdi's use of the orchestra--from a simple harmonic support to its intense participation in the dramatic expression of the late operas.[10]

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[8]Paul Henry Lang, Music in Western Civilization (New York: W.W. Norton, 1941), p. 865.

[9]Alfred Einstein, Music in the Romantic Era (New York: W.W. Norton, 1947), p. 35.

[10]Unless otherwise stated, all observations on orchestral techniques in the Verdi operas are based upon the author's study of the full orchestral scores housed in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. and the New York City Public Library, and upon examination of recorded materials.

The Early Operas

The orchestration of Verdi's first surviving opera, Oberto, Conte di San Bonifacio is not unskillful. At its best, it is comparable to Donizetti or uninspired Rossini. The unyielding symmetry and squareness of melody and form are paralleled by a like-wise methodical style of orchestration. The instruments are treated in "blocks," being added to or omitted from the texture of the score in their family groups only. The general aim of this device is simply to strengthen or weaken the volume. The only places of orchestral interest occur in the introductions to the acts and in the interludes. The orchestra is completely undistinguished when it is associated with the voice, becoming a simple, purely accompanimental device. Verdi, being a "singer's composer," was primarily concerned with having the solo voice easily heard.

Immediately visible in the Oberto, Conte di San Bonifacio score is the standard scheme of aria orchestration adopted by Verdi from his predecessors Rossini, Bellini, and Donizetti. A short introduction presents the main melody played by the woodwinds. With the entry of the vocal line, the strings take over the accompaniment, the woodwinds thereafter being reserved for variations in coloration. This orchestration scheme remained a trademark of Verdi's compositional style for as long as the aria form was used by him.

In Un Giorno di Regno (1840), Verdi typified the opera-buffa style to which he had been exposed in Busseto and Milan. Quick tempi, much utilization of triple meter, repeated notes, and short fragmentary melodies are used to create a light, playful atmosphere. Also for humorous effect, Verdi frequently employed a heavy unison staccato for all the brass in their lowest register, often followed by a high-register string reply. Verdi maintained a general brightness and brilliance throughout the Un Giorno di Regno score through the extensive use of the piccolo. The percussion section of the orchestra is overused, also in an apparent attempt to produce comic effect. During the entire second theme of the overture, for instance, the triangle plays every eighth-note beat in a context of high woodwinds. As it was in Oberto, Conte di San Bonifacio, the brass writing in Un Giorno di Regno tends to be heavy and thick, often creating a cluttered and distorted texture.[11]

Un Giorno di Regno contains recitatives with basso continuo accompaniment. It is, in fact, the only Verdi opera in which the orchestra does not play throughout. Verdi labelled the continuo part as cembalo in some instances and as pianoforte in others. The work also contains recitatives that are string-accompanied.

Verdi's orchestral technique here is not inferior to that of many of his contemporaries, but, as yet, there is little

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[11] Travis, Verdi's Orchestration, p. 21.

indication of the later dramatic sensitivities. The voice is still the absolute center of attention. The orchestra is never allowed its own expression or even a counter-melodic expression. There is scarcely a vocal accompaniment in the work that is not a minimal "bass-chord" support.

The most interesting technique displayed in this early work is Verdi's introduction of a solo instrument into the texture of the score to double the voice part at melodic climaxes. This underlining device became an important means by which Verdi could enhance the dramatic significance of a melodic phrase in the later operas.

Another orchestral technique found frequently in the later works had its birth in Un Giorno di Regno. A main theme is played in the orchestra after it has already been introduced in the vocal line. The voice then comments upon the theme. A favorite device for reintroducing motives in the late operas, Verdi confined its use in this opera to the closing sections of arias.

Nabucco (1842) offers the first signs of originality in Verdi's orchestration. Most impressive in the work are the coloristic revelations which allow the orchestra greater participation in the total drama. More elaborate accompaniments frequently contain several independent figures which combine to produce dense orchestral textures. For the first time, Verdi seemed aware of the expressive possibilities of orchestral color. In Nabucco, he tended towards somber and melancholy tonal shades, achieved primarily through the employment of solo woodwind

combinations. When scored in a widely spaced texture, they produce a hollow and mournful effect representative of the captive Hebrew people.

Verdi obtained a delicacy and clarity in most of the *piano* passages of this opera; the *forte* sections, however, seem too dense and too much alike with the possible exception of the first-act chorus of the Hebrews. Here, an immense sweep of sound expressively depicts the despair, confusion and anger of the Jews at the capture and desecration of their temple by the Babylonians.

The dirge-like processional music at the beginning of the final scene illustrates a new scoring technique for Verdi. He employed a woodwind melody in octaves over very soft and ponderous chords in the low brass. The combination of this instrumentation and the widely spaced texture gives the effect of spent effort and lack of further resistance from the captive race.

Orchestral excitement is attained at various points throughout the work through the frequent utilization of the string *tremolo* and extended use of brass *banda*[12] sonorities.

Undoubtedly the most famous number in *Nabucco* is the third-act chorus "Va, pensiero, sull'ali dorate." Much of the success of this piece must be attributed to the appeal of its orchestral setting. In the overture to the opera, the main theme in triple meter is presented as a contrast to a *fortissimo allegro*

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[12] In nineteenth-century Italian opera, *banda* most often refers to the brass band which is used on the stage or behind the scene.

section. Here the setting is simple, the melody played by clarinets and oboes in octaves above pizzicato strings sounding on beats one and two. Its return, following the contrasting middle section of the overture, is amplified by having the trumpets join the oboes and clarinets on the melody over a triplet-embellished version of the pizzicato string accompaniment. The actual chorus, in Act III, scene ii, employs a full, lush orchestration. The choral melody is doubled by the first violins, cellos, solo oboe, two clarinets, and two bassoons with a "bass-chord-chord" accompaniment in the double basses, cimbasso,[13] violas, and four horns. In addition, a broken-chord figure in sextuplets is played by the second violins.

Verdi's next work, I Lombardi alla Prima Crociata, was premiered at La Scala in 1843, and shows few new signs of his development as an orchestrator. In respect to the texture of Verdi's orchestration, however, Giselda's "Salve Maria" from Act I is of interest. The aria is an excellent example of a particular accompaniment sonority which would eventually produce some of the most expressive and dramatic moments in La Traviata, Un Ballo in Maschera, La Forza del Destino, Aida, and Otello. The texture is

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[13]This term originally referred to the narrow-bore Italian tuba in B-flat. It is found frequently in Italian operatic scores and has come to represent the lowest brass instrument, usually the bass trombone or tuba. See Sibyl Marcuse, Musical Instruments: A Comprehensive Dictionary (New York: W.W. Norton, 1975), p. 102.

characterized by sustained strings in the middle and upper registers. The violins are divisi in four parts, two players to a part, with violas and cellos entering a few measures after the beginning of the aria. Light, graceful arpeggi, played first by the clarinet and then by the flute, punctuate the vocal line.[14] Part way through the aria, the strings become silent and the flute and clarinet are left to accompany the voice in a brief trio, followed by the re-entry of the strings. The entire accompaniment, with its sustained ethereal quality, scarcely goes below middle C.

A further orchestral innovation in I Lombardi alla Prima Crociata is Verdi's use of a solo violin in the prelude to the third act. This is actually an "aria" for violin consisting of a primary lyrical section followed by a section of virtuosic embellishment.

The final point of interest in the orchestration of I Lombardi alla Prima Crociata is the restraint the composer

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[14] Andrew Porter, in the notes accompanying the Philips recording of I Lombardi alla Prima Crociata (6703 032), points out that the woodwind flourishes here are a direct quotation from the Willow Song in Rossini's Otello (1816).

displayed in the last measures of the opera. He ignored the tradition of concluding the work with the usual allegro alternation of dominant and tonic chords. Instead, he dramatically maintained a majestic andante through a long crescendo to the end of the opera, thus retaining the expressive character of the opera's solemn final scene.

The orchestra of Ernani (1844) is most impressive for its coloristic mood setting of the underground tomb of Charlemagne in the prelude to the third act. Verdi achieved this atmosphere with a melody in G minor played by a solo bass clarinet, accompanied chordally by two bassoons. The texture of the scoring is simple and transparent; yet, when coupled with the haunting quality of the low woodwinds, the dramatic effectiveness is undeniable. In general, the aria accompaniments of Ernani display much more delicacy than those in any of the earlier works. Most important, however, is the increased sense of orchestral timing. There is a heightened feeling of dramatic unity here because changes in orchestral texture coincide with shifts of dramatic action in the opera. The best illustration of this concept in Ernani is to be found in the short postlude to Carlo's third act aria "Oh, de' verd'anni miei." As Carlo descends slowly into the tomb, the final melodic phrase of the aria is repeated by the full woodwind section, followed by the last two measures of the theme played by high winds alone, and finally by pizzicato strings. This gradual thinning of the texture along with the application of a continuous diminuendo

reflects aurally what is happening visually on the stage.

Also in Ernani, melodies with a particular significance in the plot are embedded further into the overall drama through their utilization in the orchestra. Ernani, in fact, contains what might be considered Verdi's first employment of the Leitmotiv ideal, the music associated with Ernani's horn occurring in the prelude and the second and fourth acts.[15]

I Due Foscari (1844) is noted for its use of solo winds--not in combinations as in Nabucco, but as individual instruments. In the overture, for instance, the solo flute and the solo clarinet present short, independent themes associated with particular characters in the opera. Each of these character motives returns in the work and is played by the same instrument.

The greatest single advance in I Due Foscari, however, is Verdi's growing ability to create a mood through the orchestration. Charles Osborne, in his study of this opera, acknowledges the "shadowy gloom which predominates throughout the opera"[16] and states that "the darkly pessimistic orchestral colour never seems merely applied to the vocal line, but it is used as an intrinsic element in the sound texture."[17] As was the case with Ernani, this

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[15]Francis Toye, Giuseppe Verdi: His Life and Works (New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1931); reprint edition (New York: Vintage Books, 1959), p. 243.

[16]Osborne, Operas, p. 100.

[17]Ibid., p. 104.

atmosphere is developed primarily through the use of thin textures and low woodwind sonorities. The final entrance of the "Council of Ten" in Act III of the opera is a fine example of this dark and solemn mood-painting. The entire accompaniment for the processional consists of a clarinet and a bassoon in low register with the occasional interpolation of cello and bass pizzicato.

Verdi's next opera Giovanna d'Arco of 1845 offers little new orchestrally with the exception of the delicate writing for solo woodwind combinations in the Andante Pastorale section of the overture and in the accompaniment to Giovanna's Romanza in the garden at Rheims in Act I, scene ii.

Unfortunately prominent in this opera is the exceptionally poor quality of the choral accompaniment. In the prologue of the opera, for instance, Verdi presented his audience with a coro di spiriti malvagi ("chorus of demons") accompanied by harmonium[18] and triangle, and a coro di spiriti eletti ("chorus of angels") supported simply by harp and accordion.[19]

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[18] A free-reed keyboard instrument using wind under pressure supplied by compression bellows (as opposed to suction bellows as in the American organ). The harmonium was invented by Alexandre-Francois Debain in Paris in 1840. See Marcuse, Musical Instruments, p. 228.

[19] The accordion, invented in 1822 in Berlin by Friedrich Buschmann, had become the instrument of the common man in Italy by the 1830's. Like the harmonium, Verdi's utilization of it was primarily due to its popularity with the general public. See ibid., p. 2.

In August of 1845, Verdi's eighth opera Alzira[20] was given its first production in Naples. The opera is generally considered to be the composer's least successful work, primarily because of the haste in which it was written—less than one month. Here, Verdi retained the block orchestration technique with the orchestra regressing to a purely accompanimental function. Percussion and brass elements are greatly over-used in music and textures that seem oblivious to the dramatic intention. Only in the overture, which opens exotically with woodwinds and drums alone, and in the full-textured, almost symphonic introduction to Act II, scene ii does one find any orchestral interest in the piece at all.

The overture to Attila (1846) marks a milestone in the development of Verdi's orchestral technique. Here are found the first extended passages of intense string writing, the forerunners of the highly expressive sonorities of La Traviata, La Forza del Destino, and Aida. First and second violins join in a lush divisi texture which spans three octaves. The accompaniments of the opera represent Verdi's most transparent and delicate supports to date.

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[20]The orchestral score of Alzira exists only in Verdi's manuscript and the author's observations of the orchestration of this work are based on Charles Osborne's study of the original score, housed in Archivio Storico Ricordi in Milan. See Osborne, Operas, pp. 121-130.

Attila also signals the beginning of a breakdown in the block technique of orchestration. Instruments are no longer exclusively associated with their families in accompanimental responsibilities. Rather, they achieve independent functions in conjunction with a variety of sonorities within the texture of the score.

With I Masnadieri of 1847, Verdi began to fill out and give contour to his score through the use of the orchestra. This he achieved primarily through two methods, both of which employ the woodwinds.

The first method concerns the addition of a melody-doubling instrument, usually of a woodwind, to emphasize the shape of a phrase. Verdi had already utilized this device in a rudimentary form in his earlier works, but here it is more than a purely musical technique. In I Masnadieri, for the first time, he used this method in direct relation to the dramatic emphasis of the text. The second innovation involves the entrance of woodwind instruments at focal points in the vocal line in order to close off and highlight important phrases with a woodwind-colored cadence. In both techniques, the woodwinds comment on and accentuate the dramatic possibilities of the melody and the related text.

Other new orchestral features found in I Masnadieri include the excited staccato upwards arpeggi as Francesco enters at the beginning of Act IV, terrified by the dream he has just had, and

the thick, mysterious chords in the low brass and bassoons accompanying his recounting of that dream to Arminfo in the same act.

Of Verdi's next opera, Il Corsaro, written in Paris during the winter of 1847–48, Francis Toye says, "It is perhaps the only opera in which Verdi was definitely, if not deliberately, false to his fine ideals of craftsmanship. It possesses, however, the merit of extreme brevity."[21]

Musically and dramatically, Il Corsaro leaves much to be desired; but as the 1966 revival at St. Pancras in London illustrated, some sections of the score contain music of high quality.[22] For instance, Corrado's aria "Tutto parea sorridere," which opens the opera, indicates a further development in Verdi's dramatic utilization of the orchestra. Following the first verse of the aria, the main theme is given to the strings while the voice punctuates the melody with complete phrases of recitative commentary, reinforcing the emotional expressions of the first vocal verse. This is the first example in Verdi's music of this technique using full-phrased narrative recitative in the vocal part. It developed directly from the one- or two-word interjections over a main theme employed earlier in Un Giorno di Regno.

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[21] Toye, Verdi, p. 279.

[22] Osborne, Operas, p. 186.

Throughout the opera are various examples of fine orchestral writing. The prelude to the opera, for instance, as well as the Act I, scene ii aria for Medora illustrate the composer's continuing refinement of high *divisi* string sonorities.

La Battaglia di Legnano, premiered in Rome in January of 1849, marks the end of Verdi's early developmental period. The opera's self-contained overture, one of the finest Verdi ever wrote, displays delicate conciseness, orchestrally and harmonically. In *La Battaglia di Legnano*, Verdi clearly reverted to the use of woodwind and brass sonorities as dramatic elements, as he had done so effectively in *Ernani* and *I Due Foscari*.

The composer's entire orchestral technique is here enhanced by the employment of a greater variety of dynamic levels and textures. Throughout the work, there is a constant strengthening and dilution of the orchestration, directly related to the dramatic situation.

Also noticeable in this score is a heightened awareness of coloristic possibilities for the recitative accompaniments. This is particularly evident in Arrigo's jealousy recitative "È vero?... sei d'altri?..." preceding his Act I, scene ii duet with Lida. The use of *forte* brass and low winds is an obvious forerunner of Iago's "Credo" in *Otello*. Here, however, the dramatic effect is soon destroyed by the trivial "stock" duet form that follows the recitative.

The orchestral introduction to Act III, scene i in the crypt of Milan Cathedral displays the same highly effective

sonorities as in the third act of Ernani. This subdued Andante sostenuto section makes extensive use of thin textures and the unearthly quality of low, sustained brass instruments alone.

The Middle Period

On December 8, 1849, Verdi's Luisa Miller was premiered in Naples. This work, and more specifically Act III, is considered by most Verdi scholars to mark the beginning of the composer's mature compositional period. Luisa Miller displays a greater freedom of structure in recitative and transitional sections and the start of a breakdown in conventional aria and ensemble forms. This movement away from traditional patterns is due to Verdi's increasing sensitivity to the dramatic possibilities in the music and the realization that the drama was not always best served by rigid models.

The opera also finds the composer utilizing further the dramatic powers of the orchestra in respect to instrumental color, texture, and dynamics. The entire work is pervaded by an atmosphere of pastoral tranquillity. Orchestrally, this docile and peasant-like mood is portrayed through the use of simple woodwind and string sonorities in chordal textures. The solo clarinet, in particular, becomes a symbol of the peacefulness and contentment of country life.

The Luisa Miller score is, by comparison with other Verdi works, quite plentiful in purely orchestral effects, comparable

in this respect only to Aida and Falstaff.[23] Backstage chimes are utilized to depict the tolling of the village clock in Act I, scene i, while small orchestral bells sound as the clock in the Miller's cottage in the final scene of the opera. Act I, scene iii opens with two horns backstage, indicating the activities of the huntsmen in the woods. Off-stage organ, illustrating the proximity of the village church, and string tremolo figures, which open the final scene of the work, provide a mournful foreboding of the tragic demise of the lovers. This scene is in fact an almost exact parallel of the closing scene of Otello, still some thirty-eight years away. Following a prayer scene for the heroine, a brief orchestral section accompanies the entrance of the jealous lover who believes that his lady has been unfaithful to him. Enraged, he kills her, realizing only too late that he has been deceived and that the woman was innocent. The dramatic similarities between the two scenes are obvious, and regarding texture and the use of coloristic effects, one can perceive here the seeds that would develop in 1887 into one of the greatest scenes in all opera.

This scene is a fine example of dramatic situation portrayed through the implementation of the orchestra. From the abrupt, heavily accented low string phrases that punctuate Rodolfo's accusations and the feeble woodwind "sighs" that accompany Luisa's

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[23] Travis, Verdi's Orchestration, p. 26.

admissions of guilt, to the four ominous bass clarinet figures heard as Luisa drinks the poisoned wine and the terrible timpani strokes at the end of this action, the orchestra is used to relate the conflict and frustration of the lovers. As the final trio begins, a triplet string figure symbolizes the poison and soft woodwind arpeggi indicate the ebbing of Luisa's life.[24]

In Rigoletto (1851), Verdi continued the process he had begun in the final act of Luisa Miller--a move towards opening the closed forms of nineteenth-century Italian opera. In this work, more than ever before, he utilized orchestral devices in direct relationship to the dramatic features they represent. Verdi followed the concept that with each change of dramatic situation there must be a consequent change in sound--either a new harmony, a new melodic figure, a different dynamic treatment, a fresh instrumental color, or a combination of any of these characteristics.

Block orchestration is minimized in Rigoletto, and, as a result, solo instruments are used independently for their coloristic effect. An example of this is the addition of a solo English horn in the second section of Rigoletto's famous Act II aria "Cortigiani, vil razza." This instrument, with its melancholy and mournful tone, accompanies the pleading vocal line in thirds with an accompaniment of pizzicato violins, violas, and basses playing on the first and

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[24]Vincent Godefroy, The Dramatic Genius of Verdi: Studies of Selected Operas, Vol. I (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1975), p. 185.

third beats of each measure and an arpeggiated sextuplet figure played by solo cello.

In the third act of the opera, Verdi made effective use of a single oboe in the dialogue between Rigoletto and the assassin Sparafucile where they plan the murder of the Duke ("Venti scudi hai tu detto?"). Another particularly effective use of solo instruments is found in the Act I, scene ii duet sung by the same characters. Here, two dark solo voices--bass and baritone--converse in recitative-like phrases while solo cello and solo double bass, both muted, play a unison melody, accompanied softly with chords played by clarinets, bassoons, violas, cellos, and double basses.

The majority of solo instrumental treatment in this work, however, is exercised in an orchestration technique new to Verdi. In works before Rigoletto, the composer had employed the orchestra in the description of isolated dramatic actions or physical settings. In Rigoletto, however, Verdi introduced particular orchestral qualities and associated them with specific individuals or objects throughout the entire opera.

In the case of the title character, Verdi manipulated string sonorities into the various phases of Rigoletto's personality. The dark, twisting string figures that accompany his first act soliloquy "Pari siamo!" indicate the bent body and mind of the jester. As he mocks the Duke in "Questo padrone mio," the accompaniment takes on a playful and sarcastic nature through the

utilization of low string pizzicati. Rigoletto's feelings of loss and yearning following the abduction of his daughter are indicated in the "sobbing" violin figure at his entrance in the second act, and imitated in his first vocal line of that scene, "La rà, la rà." The turbulent string introduction to his enraged "Cortigiani" builds to an orchestral tutti and then, as he breaks down in humiliation, reverts to a simple, chordal string accompaniment in the subdued and desperate second section of the aria. In the duet "Tutte le feste al tempio" reuniting father and daughter, his phrases of consolation are supported by a string-dominated tutti. In the final act of the work, when the Duke is heard singing in the distance, Verdi utilized an excited string tremolo to depict the pounding heart of Rigoletto, who had thought his opponent dead.[25]

Throughout the opera, the character of Gilda is associated with solo flute and high, light string sonorities, first heard in her Act I, scene ii aria "Caro nome." Here solo flute trills, solo violin, and muted divisi solo violins (marked pppp) represent the girl's innocence and naiveté. In the Act II duet "Tutte le feste al tempio," Gilda's pleas for her father's forgiveness are doubled by the flute and underlined by light, detached string chords. In the famous Act III quartet "Bella figlia dell'amore," Gilda's vocal line is doubled by flute, first violins, and solo

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[25]Ibid., p. 221.

oboe. In the opera's final duet, as Gilda dies in her father's arms ("Lassù in cielo"), the flute plays a repeated arpeggiated figure indicating the girl's dying breaths.

The other major orchestral characterization in Rigoletto is the curse of Monterone. Verdi used low brass and woodwinds to denote the curse placed upon Rigoletto and the Duke. The theme is first played by solo trumpet and trombone in the prelude to the opera, and then again in Act I, scene i during the actual curse by Monterone. Verdi then proceeded to incorporate the dark, fateful quality of the brass and winds into the score whenever any reference to the curse occurs.

Special orchestral effects are less numerous in Rigoletto than they are in Luisa Miller. The onstage string orchestra of Act I, scene i, the orchestral tutti reinforcements of Rigoletto's eight knocks on Sparafucile's door, and the two-fold chiming of the town clock in Act III are examples of such devices, utilized purely for dramatic effect.

Undoubtedly, the most important orchestral characterization in the opera is the famous Act III storm scene. Here, Verdi employed a variety of instrumental effects to produce a highly dramatic presentation of the tempest. Tremolando strings give the impression of uneasiness and the impending storm. Verdi wrote fragmentary scale passages for the flute and piccolo to portray the flashes of lightning. The bass drum produces the

distant rumbling of thunder and a thunder sheet[26] is added to the score as the storm strikes with all its fury. The ferocity of the scene is increased by the inclusion of percussive brass and woodwind parts and churning strings. A non-orchestral contributor to this atmosphere is the male chorus bocca chiusa[27] representing the howling of the wind.

The basic orchestral forces and techniques in Verdi's next opera Il Trovatore (1853) closely parallel those of Rigoletto. The solemn, martial atmosphere of Il Trovatore is effectively portrayed by the orchestra in the opening measures of the work. A triple roll of timpani and bass drum, a descending fanfare for tutti orchestra, and echo-like fanfare figures for solo horn and then solo trumpet establish the mood for the dramatic prologue to the opera. Solo clarinet and solo bassoon predominate in the scoring of this narration by Ferrando, and the use of sequential and chromatic movement provides the appropriate mood for his story of gypsies, witchcraft, and murder.

Verdi employed a "slithering" chromatic figure in the woodwinds and strings in the short postlude to Ferrando's aria

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[26] This is a large rectangular sheet of thin metal, usually tin or, more recently, aluminum which, when struck by a mallet, effectively reproduces the sound of thunder.

[27] Humming with a closed mouth.

"Abbietta zingara," thereby adding to the ominous atmosphere of the scene. With the abrupt interruption of the offstage chiming of the village clock, Ferrando and his guards scatter in fear, and Verdi incorporated an agitated tutti to depict their hysteria, followed by a gradual diminuendo and thinning of the orchestral texture portraying their flight into the distance.

One of the most vivid orchestral descriptions in this opera is that of the Act II, scene i gypsy camp. Verdi scored the short orchestral opening for strings and woodwinds alone, omitting the brass and lending a Bohemian feeling to the scene. A strongly rhythmic folk-like melody, highly ornamented with trills, is played in octaves and unisons. An additional gypsy-like element in the orchestra is Verdi's inclusion of the triangle. The scene quickly builds to the famous "Anvil Chorus," in which the composer employs a tutti of eighteen different instruments. Verdi called for martelli sulle incudini,[28] tuned in octaves, to secure the rhythm of the piece. Though simplistic by comparison, one cannot help but think of Wagner's Nibelheim and the anvils of Alberich's domain, still sixteen years away. Half-way through this chorus, Verdi introduced the character of Azucena in the mysterious E minor "Stride la vampa." This aria parallels the

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[28] Literally translated as "hammers on the anvils." Verdi asks for paired anvils tuned in octaves to C, although no specific number of anvil pairs is indicated.

Act I narrative of Ferrando in respect to form and tonality. Its greater dramatic success, however, is primarily due to the composer's handling of the orchestra. In Ferrando's aria, Verdi utilized a full-textured accompaniment, while in "Stride la vampa," he supported the voice with more economy. The simple waltz rhythm is played by the cellos and double basses while the vocal line is doubled by the first violins, complete with ornamentation. In the middle section of each verse, this doubling line is replaced by soft, sustained chords in the clarinets and bassoons. At the end of each verse the voice executes a four-measure trill doubled by bassoons, while paired clarinets play a chromatic figure in minor thirds.

Following the departure of the gypsies, Azucena relates the horror of her past to Manrico, accompanied by violins and a solo oboe. As she tells of the tragic events of her youth in frantic phrases of recitative, Verdi inserted woodwind and staccato string "flickers" into the score, representing flames. The violins divide and play the "Stride la vampa" theme as Azucena recalls her mother's death at the stake. As she screams for vengeance, a fortissimo orchestral tutti is heard, followed immediately by a sudden diminuendo to a pianissimo pulsation in the cellos and double basses. Verdi, through the frequent alternation between full fortissimo textures and quiet, brooding string sonorities dramatically portrayed the instability of the woman's mind.

In addition to the anvils and chimes, Verdi employed two other special dramatic sound effects. The first is the offstage

harp which represents the lute accompanying Manrico's distant serenade in the first act of the opera. The other is the Act II offstage horn which signals Ruiz's entrance into the gypsy camp.

Another notable dramatic effect is produced in the Act III interrogation of Azucena by di Luna. To the Count's question "Ovè vai?" she replies "Nol so." She then continues to answer in fragmentary phrases, but is constantly interrupted by the strings as though she is hesitating, thinking of what to say next. This same device can be found thirty-four years later following the Cassio-Montano brawl in Act I of Otello. Iago, asked by Otello what the disturbance is about, answers "Non so." He then explains the situation, again interrupted by short string figures symbolizing his evil intentions.[29]

An almost Wagnerian technique is evident in the scoring of Il Trovatore's Act IV, scene i Miserere. In Act III, Manrico warns Leonora that the fortress is to be attacked at dawn, and she fears for their impending marriage. A pianissimo melody played by the cellos and double basses accompanies her words of concern. Then in the Act IV Miserere, the same theme, with the much stronger dramatic implication of full orchestra, underlies her words "Quel suon, quelle preci, solenni funeste," effectively depicting the realization of her previous fears.

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[29]Godefroy, Studies, Vol. I, p. 241.

The final scene of the opera is dramatically preceded by a brief, solemn homophonic prelude for tutti orchestra. The wandering of Azucena's mind is again conveyed by the "Stride la vampa" theme played by solo flute, clarinet, and bassoon, supported by tremolo strings.

One final point of orchestral interest in Il Trovatore is the delicate use of muted violins divisi in Manrico's "lullaby" as Azucena falls to sleep.

The score of La Traviata (1853) is known more for its refinement of devices already in Verdi's orchestral language than for its presentation of new orchestral techniques. The work is an excellent example of the economical utilization of the orchestra for maximum dramatic revelation.

One of the most striking moments of this score is the melancholy Prelude to the opera, a foreboding of the work's ultimate tragedy. Verdi scored the Prelude for sixteen solo violins divisi in four parts. The full but fragile texture most successfully expresses what Vincent Godefroy calls "the pity and terror of the heroine's inner decay."[30]

Verdi utilized a form of reminiscence technique when the opening passage of this prelude returns as the introduction to the final act of the opera, in which Violetta meets her long-destined death.

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[30] Ibid., p. 281.

The contrast between the closing curtain of one act and the opening of the next is one of the operatic composer's most valuable devices. In La Traviata, as he later did so strikingly in Otello, Verdi followed the full ensemble-finale of Act II with an expressive prelude which leads to a mournful aria for the heroine.

The delicacy and economy of the scoring employed in the Preludes is in evidence throughout the opera. More than ever before, the score is filled with detailed instructions concerning the orchestra, particularly regarding the specific number of strings and woodwinds required. A fine example of this attention to detail is found in the first act, where Verdi, concerned for the clarity of the important dialogue at the beginning of the scene, stipulated that the accompaniment be restricted to two first violins, two second violins, two violas, one cello, and one double bass. Through this string octet instrumentation, the audience is introduced to Flora and is allowed to hear the important introduction of Alfredo to Violetta by Gastone. At the entrance of the Baron, Verdi added solo oboe to the texture, gradually thickening the orchestration up to the tutti outburst at the brindisi.[31]

La Traviata contains the fewest purely instrumental effects to date, the Act I offstage banda--the dance orchestra in an

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[31]This term is derived from the Italian fare brindisi--to drink to one's health. In Italian opera the word has come to represent the traditional drinking song. See Harold Rosenthal and John Warrack, The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Opera (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 52.

adjacent room—being the only instance in the opera.

Dramatically, the orchestra maintains two major functions in La Traviata. The first is the representation of an over-all atmosphere, as in sections of the party scenes of Act I and Act II, scene ii. In both cases, much of the important dramatic dialogue and action of the scene is combined with an orchestral accompaniment that seems oblivious to the main dramatic thrust. An example of this device occurs in the Act II gambling scene at Flora's party. Here, a quick, frivolous waltz theme, scored for strings, clarinets, and flutes depicts the festive mood of the party while the main action of the scene finds Alfredo cruelly ignoring and then mocking the emotionally-tortured Violetta. There is also the lively 2/4 rhythm of the opera's opening scene, in which most of the major characters are introduced, as well as the brilliant waltz tempo which underlies both the beginning and conclusion of the passionate Act I Violetta-Alfredo love scene.

The second and most frequent dramatic function of the orchestra is the strengthening and highlighting of the dramatic dialogue and action. Nowhere is this more evident than in the extended scene between Violetta and the elder Germont in Act II, scene i.

Following Germont's initial plea for Violetta to leave Alfredo, a simple, tranquil melody is played by the violins, indicating Violetta's agreement to see less of Germont's son. As the father's demands increase, however, the orchestration

builds to a great tutta forza. Shaken, Violetta tries to reason with Germont, her "Non sapete" section sung in short fragmentary phrases, constantly interrupted by the orchestra, indicating a mounting agitation and despair. Then, as she realizes the hopelessness of the situation, she bursts forth in an emotionally-charged passage bewailing her fate. Verdi scored this dramatic outburst with a full orchestral texture, complete with three trombones, cimbasso, and timpani.

In the duet that follows, in which Germont tries to console the distraught Violetta, Verdi utilized the barest of textures, with woodwind "sighs" doubling the father's words "piangi, piangi" and low pizzicati accompanying Violetta's talk of death.

Similar orchestral reinforcement of the drama occurs in Act II, scene ii in the bitter confrontation between Alfredo and Violetta at Flora's party. As the "festive waltz" theme dies away, it is replaced by an upward surge of violins and a tutti orchestral crash as Violetta and Alfredo re-enter the gambling salon. Their dialogue, in which he accuses her of infidelity and she desperately claims innocence, is accompanied by a pulsating figure in the strings, effectively portraying the tension of the situation. Another orchestral tutta forza accompanies the entrance of the alarmed party guests, and the scene is prepared for the great ensemble-finale.

Many factors complicate the analysis of Verdi's development as an orchestrator in the period between La Traviata and Aida,

comprised of I Vespri Siciliani, Simon Boccanegra, Aroldo (a reworking of Stiffelio), Un Ballo in Maschera, La Forza del Destino, the second version of Macbeth, and Don Carlo, Verdi's orchestral technique becomes largely static as it nears its final point of development. During this period, the composer appeared to be concerned mainly with relating the orchestral expression more closely to the dramatic content of the works rather than with experimenting with new textures or devices.

Furthermore, two of these works (Aroldo and Macbeth) are revised versions of previous works, making this period one of disunity—a mixture of late and early styles.[32]

Richard Wagner labelled I Vespri Siciliani "a night of carnage."[33] To a libretto by Eugène Scribe and Charles Duveyrier, the opera—Verdi's first work written for Paris—is indeed an endless expression of gloom. The composer utilized a wide variety of orchestral sonorities, but all are subdued and dark—particularly with respect to his extensive use of low-pitched woodwind and brass instruments. It is noteworthy that the only sections of true musical interest are the purely orchestral pieces—the

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[32]For the purpose of this chronological survey, discussion pertains to the "standard" performance version of any opera that exists in two or more versions.

[33]Toye, Verdi, p. 93.

overture, the preludes to the second and fourth acts, and the Act III ballet entitled "The Four Seasons." By far the best piece in I Vespri Siciliani is the overture, based upon three prominent themes from the opera. With respect to the musical craftsmanship and orchestral imagination and compared with the level set by La Traviata, Il Trovatore, and Rigoletto, however, Francis Toye is certainly correct when he acknowledges the undeniable recession in the quality of this work.[34] This is undoubtedly due to Verdi's preoccupation with establishing himself in competition with Meyerbeer in Meyerbeer's own domain, and at having to deviate from his own style of orchestration to favour the Parisians' traditional taste for the spectacular.[35]

The orchestra of Aroldo (1857) is woven into the drama of the opera to a much greater extent. The score is pervaded with an unprecedented orchestral forcefulness and intensity, foreshadowing the dramatic scenes of conflict between Alvaro and Carlo, Philip and Roderigo, and Iago and Otello. Act II opens with the dark, brooding orchestral introduction to Mina's aria "Ah, dagli scanni eterei." The orchestra plays a vital part in developing the atmosphere of this scene. In the accompaniment to Mina's aria, one finds the most complicated division of strings ever undertaken by Verdi. Two groups of solo strings con sordino (violin I,

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[34] Ibid., p. 330.

[35] Ibid.

violin II, viola, cello, and double bass) are given individual, delicate melodic passages which are played against a pianissimo arpeggiated figure in the remaining tutti strings. This arrangement, though more elaborate, does not carry the same dramatic intensity as the highly expressive string divisions in La Traviata.

The Act IV storm scene is an advance over the previous examples, due mainly to its heightened dynamic sensitivity. It still, however, bears a nearer resemblance to the Rigoletto tempest than to the Otello one. Lightning is again depicted by jagged flute and piccolo figures and the moaning of the wind by string and woodwind chromatic passages in parallel minor thirds. The chorus also participates, not with bocca chiusa (as in Rigoletto) but by vocalizing on "ah," interspersed with short phrases of text.

Un Ballo in Maschera (1858) marks the end of Verdi's middle compositional period. The work represents an important point in the composer's progress musically and orchestrally. It contains far greater musical variety and orchestral inventiveness than any of Verdi's previous works, and more than ever before, Verdi's scoring is attuned to the dramatic structure of the opera. It combines the warmth and vigour of the composer's early works and the lightness and elegance of La Traviata with a new emotional intensity. The desperate passion of Riccardo and Amelia, Renato's blind rage, the light-hearted wit of Oscar, the ominous presence of Ulrica, and the sardonic humor of the conspirators are all

qualities which are portrayed through Verdi's utilization of orchestral elements.

In this work, the composer demonstrates a much greater flexibility in his use of orchestral color, particularly with regard to the woodwinds. Inner voices such as bassoons and violas are given much more active parts, resulting in a subtle inner orchestral life not found before. This was the feature which caused Italian critics to herald Un Ballo in Maschera as "more polyphonic in style."[36]

In this score, Verdi brings together many of the orchestral resources that he had previously used with mastery--the discriminating woodwind writing of Luisa Miller and Rigoletto, the expressive divisi string technique of La Traviata and Aroldo, a witchcraft scene, already found in the first version of Macbeth (1847), and the creation of a ghostly atmosphere, accomplished much earlier (although in a completely different fashion) in Ernani and La Battaglia di Legnano.

The work opens with a short orchestral prelude consisting of three themes from the opera. The first is the solemn, hymn-like tune which is sung by the courtiers at the opening of Act I as they await Riccardo. It is scored for clarinets in the chalumeau register, bassoons, violas and violoncellos, and violins on their G string. This melody, punctuated by a short unison woodwind

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[36]Travis, Verdi's Orchestration, p. 28.

figure, is a foreboding of the opera's ultimate tragedy. The somber mood is broken by a brief fugato for strings on a theme in the cellos and basses, assai piano e staccato, which gives an unmistakable impression of betrayal and stealth. This is the theme associated with Sam, Tom, and the conspirators. It is heard in each of the three acts of the opera in scenes dealing with the conspiracy to assassinate Riccardo. The third theme of the Prelude, connected with Riccardo's longing for Amelia, is introduced by flute and oboe in unison in their lower registers with the clarinet an octave lower. This melody is decorated by the figure previously played by the woodwinds over the first theme. This time, however, the figure is played in violin harmonics. The use of harmonics, otherwise rare until Aida, is characteristic of the Un Ballo in Maschera score.

As each of these themes reappeared in the opera, Verdi utilized the same scoring, illustrating the importance he placed upon the relationship of orchestral coloring to dramatic purpose, even in accompanimental functions.

Though there is a great deal of music depicting sorrow, conspiracy, and evil in the opera, it also represents the first instance of fun and gaiety playing an integral part. Verdi had previously achieved these moods through ballet and chorus scenes. In Un Ballo in Maschera, however, he created several moments of light-heartedness through solo scenes--Riccardo's high-spirited "Ogni cura si doni al diletto" at the end of the first scene, his

laughter at hearing Ulrica's prophecy in the second scene of Act I ("È scherzo od è folia"), and the mocking laughter of the conspirators in Act II when Renato discovers his wife's supposed infidelity.

The coloratura role for Oscar the page, however, contains the most uninhibited examples of frivolity. Much of this atmosphere is achieved through the composer's orchestral setting of his music. For these moments, Verdi shifted towards brighter instrumental colors, with high violin and flute writing and extensive use of the piccolo. Spike Hughes has noted that the piccolo is here "stretching its limbs, as it were, in preparation for the almost concertante part it eventually takes in Falstaff."[37]

One of the most effective orchestral characterizations in the opera is the introduction to Act I, scene ii creating the mysterious atmosphere of the fortune-teller Ulrica's den. Following three attention-getting tutti fortissimo chords, two clarinets in the low register and cellos on their C string play an eerie theme as Ulrica hovers over her cauldron. Interjections of a solo trumpet on a low repeated C are played throughout this highly dramatic introduction, combined with faint, sporadic drum-beats used by Verdi to create tension.

The accompaniment to Ulrica's dramatic aria "Re dell'abisso affrettati" is distinguished by its orchestral restraint. The

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[37] Hughes, Famous Verdi Operas, p. 246.

opening measures are supported solely by violins and violas doubling the vocal line—the violins in unison with the voice and the violas an octave lower. Pianissimo timpani strokes punctuate the melody during empty beats. The winds gradually enter—the flute in its lowest register with the bassoon at the top of its range in unison with the oboe. The repeated C's of the solo trumpet persist throughout.

Later in the scene, Ulrica tells Amelia that she must gather herbs in the shadow of the gallows ("Dalla città all'occaso"), and Verdi introduced a simple homophonic string accompaniment moving homorhythmically with the voice. This device becomes increasingly common in his later works. In fact, the third and fourth measures of this theme are an obvious forecast of Iago's "Era la notte" in Act II of Otello, melodically, texturally, and orchestrally.

The Trio which closes Act I is noteworthy for its fortissimo sections, which at a glance appear to be normal orchestral tutti's. Closer scrutiny reveals that Verdi omitted flutes, trumpets, and trombones, and included the bass brass known today as cimbasso (bass trombone and tuba). This scoring keeps the voices at the focal point of the ensemble, and the orchestra is kept strictly within the singers' registers.

Other sections of orchestral-dramatic interest in this opera include the solo flute and string tremolando passage in the Prelude to Act II depicting the nobility and innocence of Amelia, the mournful English horn obbligato in her aria "Ma dall'arido stelo

divulsa" (an obvious foreboding of Desdemona's "Salce," still nearly thirty years away), and the equally plaintive cello obbligato to her Act III aria "Morrò, ma prima in grazia."

Verdi's utilization of the harp in the Act II Riccardo-Amelia duet, portraying their excitement and passion, is strangely similar to Otello's jealous yet equally passionate ravings in Act II of Otello ("Ora per sempre addio").

The suspenseful quality of exposed solo trumpet is once again utilized by Verdi in the scene in which Sam, Tom, and Renato draw lots for the "honour" of killing Riccardo. The trumpet creates mounting tension by playing a long sequential theme over a sustained tremolo played by violas and basses, with pianississimo unison bassoons, trombones and tuba, and short chromatic runs in the violins and cellos.

Renato's famous third act aria "Eri tu" consists of two contrasting sections, consequently accompanied by two opposing orchestral natures. The martial string figures of the first section are followed by a remorseful, reflective section, fittingly supported by solo flute, harp, and strings.

Offstage chimes denoting midnight and the onstage string orchestra of the final ballroom scene are the only instances of special orchestral effects in the work. The continual interruption of the action of the final scene by the stage orchestra proves an effective method of building dramatic tension towards the opera's tragic climax.

The Mature Works

Macbeth was premiered in Florence in 1847. Verdi revised and expanded the work for a French production in Paris in 1865. This version was subsequently translated back into Italian and has since become the standard version for modern performances.

Verdi paid particular attention to the creation of an atmosphere of mystery and evil for Shakespeare's tragedy. This is achieved through the full employment of all instruments which can be made to sound hollow or eerie, particularly the oboe, English horn, and bass clarinet. A fine example of this dramatic tonal painting is found in the Prelude to the opera where the oboe, clarinet, and bassoon play a theme in unison which is associated with the Witches. The second section of the prelude is a loud thickly-textured fanfare passage for two trumpets, four trombones, and four horns, representative of the many martial aspects of the plot. The third and final section is a foreshadowing of the music that later creates suspense in the famous Act IV, scene ii "Sleep-walking Scene." This section begins with a tranquil passage consisting of light, pulsating staccato repeated notes in the upper register of the first and second violins. This brief theme is interrupted by another short brass fortissimo outburst. A broad, mournful pianissimo tune is then played by the violas, accompanied by low pizzicato arpeggiated figures. This section successfully creates the mysterious, trance-like mood and emotional contrasts characteristic of Lady

Macbeth's insanity.

A storm scene similar to that of Rigoletto opens the action of the opera. Tremolando violins represent the wind in the Scottish heath. Short, ascending scale passages played by the flute depict flashes of lightning, as downward staccato woodwind figures indicate rain. The full orchestra is combined with a thunder sheet to create the impression of the tempest's fury.

The mysterious and eerie quality depicted in the opening theme of the Prelude is also present in the central scene of the opera--the presentation of the apparitions to Macbeth in Act III. A loud unison fanfare, again scored for four trombones and four horns, precedes the Witches' invocation of the first vision. With a roll of thunder, the first spirit appears and speaks to Macbeth, accompanied by soft, solemn chords in the trumpets and trombones.[38]

The vanishing of each apparition is marked by an orchestral tutti, with the unusual inclusion of fortissimo gong or tam-tam offstage. This special percussion device, which was added in the 1865 version, illustrates the influence of French composers, who had long associated the gong with situations of high intensity and terror.

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[38] Verdi here followed the eighteenth-century tradition of associating trombones with the supernatural, perhaps best exemplified in Mozart's Don Giovanni in the scenes involving the statue of the Commendatore.

As the images of the eight future kings of Scotland pass before Macbeth, "bagpipes" are heard ascending from the depths of the earth. For the 1847 production of the opera, Verdi had written, "The music under the stage will have to be reinforced for so vast a theater, but I want neither trumpets nor trombones. The sound must come as from afar; bass clarinets, bassoons, contra-bassoons and nothing else."[39] For the Paris version of the opera, Verdi was even more specific. He stipulated that the group representing the bagpipes be placed just underneath an open trapdoor in the stage and be comprised of two oboes, six clarinets, two bassoons, and one contrabassoon.[40] Each appearance of a king is punctuated by a cry from Macbeth and effective outbursts from the pit orchestra, creating a dramatic contrast between the ghostly world of the apparitions and the reality of Macbeth's acceptance of them.

In Macbeth, Verdi made imaginative use of brass orchestration, both in the Act III ballet, where harsh dissonances create the mood of supernatural evil, and in the Act IV battle scene, for which Verdi composed a fugue for trumpets and trombones. Here, the contrast of subject and counter-subject, the clash of the harsh

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[39] Travis, Verdi's Orchestration, p. 53.

[40] Macbeth is the first of only two operas in which Verdi used the contrabassoon, the other being Don Carlo.

brass dissonances, and the general uproar of the accompanying tutti forces express the sounds of battle in a highly effective manner.

The masterful orchestration of the "Sleepwalking Scene" is one of the dramatic highlights of the opera. The third theme of the Prelude is here played by muted strings colored by the English horn, whose melancholy quality is exploited throughout this scene and indeed throughout the entire opera. Much in the manner of Amelia's "Ma dall'arido stelo divulsa" in Act II of Un Ballo in Maschera and Desdemona's impending "Salce," Lady Macbeth's "Una macchia è qui tuttora!" is an emotional, mournfully-colored aria, supported by a short rising figure played by the violas and cellos in unison, with a wailing descending semitone in the English horn part (and later in the clarinet part an octave lower).

A very simple, yet exceptionally effective instrumental-dramatic device is found in the ensemble immediately following the discovery of Duncan's body, where the full chorus and ensemble of soloists is accompanied solely by the death-march beats of the timpani.

Additional special orchestral devices in Macbeth include the offstage banda which accompanies Duncan's March in Act I, scene ii, the offstage snare-drum roll that heralds the entrance of Macbeth and Banquo in the first scene, and, once more, the chiming of a distant bell just before the murder of Duncan.

Verdi's next opera, La Forza del Destino, was premiered in St. Petersburg on November 10, 1862 and was revised for its

La Scala production in 1869. The musical progress in this opera is the direct result of Verdi's tendency to move further away from the confinements of rigid aria form. More weight is placed on accompanied recitatives, and their orchestration, accordingly, receives more attention. These recitative passages frequently foreshadow the dramatic forcefulness of the almost through-composed orchestration of Otello. For example, Don Carlo's interrogation of Trabuco in Act I demonstrates the same continuous flow of lyrical string writing that accompanies Iago's harassment of Cassio in Act I of Otello. Likewise in Act III, scene iii, the fragmentary phrases of the conversation between Don Carlo and Alvaro are accompanied by a gentle, idyllic passage in the strings, highly reminiscent of the deceptive charm of the Act II and III scenes between Otello and Iago. Another of the music-drama techniques prominent in the Otello score is evident at the beginning of La Forza del Destino's first scene between Leonora and the Marquis. Here, through a sequence of four-part string writing, Verdi created the impression that a conversation had been in progress and was becoming audible as it reached its most interesting part. Verdi again used this technique in the opening of Act III of Otello, as Iago and Otello discuss Desdemona's supposed infidelity.

La Forza del Destino is noteworthy for its extensive use of solo winds, particularly in the dramatic situations involving Don Alvaro. One example of this association is the melody of Don Alvaro's Act IV, scene i aria "Le minaccie, i fieri accenti,"

first quoted in the overture to the opera by the solo flute, oboe, and clarinet.[41] The mournful quality of these instruments combined with the wandering melody effectively characterize Alvaro's remorse and the hopelessness of his situation. Verdi again employed this combination of solo winds in the introduction to the actual aria in Act IV.

Alvaro's entrance into the grenadiers' camp in Act III, scene i is accompanied by a long, slow passage played by the solo clarinet, based upon a theme that he had sung in the first scene of the opera. As Alvaro declaims his weariness and sadness at the loss of Leonora, the clarinet continues its melancholy obbligato supported by tremolando upper strings and pizzicato first beats in cellos and basses.

Following the battle of Act III, scene ii, the seriously-wounded Alvaro is carried onstage on a stretcher. The ensuing scene, in which Alvaro makes Carlo promise to destroy the incriminating letter, is given great dramatic intensity through relatively simple means—a persistent three-note pizzicato bass, a few sustained dissonant woodwind chords, and two particularly chilling measures where two bassoons sound in thirds. As Alvaro and Carlo bid each other farewell, Verdi wrote staccato arpeggi for paired flutes and solo clarinet, indicating the trust and contentment the men have found in their friendship.

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[41] The opera was originally preceded by a short orchestral prelude. Verdi greatly expanded and developed the material into the existing overture for the 1869 revision.

In the third scene of Act III, the recovered Alvaro enters the camp, again lost in thoughts of Leonora. Once more the composer used the dark, somber sonority of clarinet to reflect Alvaro's depressed state of mind, echoing the same theme as in the opening of Act III, scene i. Later in this scene, Alvaro's vow to enter a monastery as penance for his crime is accompanied by a series of solemn homophonic chords in the woodwinds, symbolizing his guilt and desperation.

Verdi created an atmosphere of darkness and gloom for the Act III military camp scene with open fifths in piccolo, flute, paired oboes, and horns sustained over long legatissimo phrases for violas and cellos in octaves.[42]

One of the most dramatically effective moments in the work occurs in the final scene. As Leonora leaves the stage to aid her wounded brother, a hollow, sinister forte E-flat is held by low register clarinet—an audible and bitter omen of her impending doom. The fatally-wounded Leonora tells her story to Padre Guardiano and bids farewell to Alvaro in monotone fragments accompanied by sustained unison G's played by the piccolo, flute, two oboes, and two clarinets pitted against a fortissimo rhythmically-throbbing figure for brass, strings, and bass drum, followed by the identical figure pianississimo played by strings

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[42] Hughes has noted the similarity of both mood and orchestration to the opening of Act III of Puccini's La Boheme. See Hughes, Famous Verdi Operas, p. 302.

alone. This orchestral passage successfully depicts the contrasting emotions of remorse and angry bitterness at the now-realized destiny of the lovers.

Verdi expressed the despair and innocence of Leonora primarily through the use of the strings, as in the instrumental motive associated with her destiny heard in the overture, in Act I, scene i at the entrance of her enraged father, in Act II, scene ii before her pleading aria "Madre, pietosa Vergine," and at the beginning of the opera's final scene before her famous aria "Pace, pace." This theme is always played by violins and cellos in octaves, punctuated by pianissimo bassoons and trombones in their low register.

The soaring phrase "Deh, non m'abbandonar" near the end of "Madre, pietosa Vergine" is given a particularly ethereal quality through the use of two violins con sordini and tremolando in their upper register.

The harp is also an important component in Leonora's music, portraying her innocence in her Act II, scene iii "La Vergine degli angeli" solo with the chorus of monks, her "Pace, pace" of Act IV, scene ii, and in the Act II duet with Padre Guardiano.[43]

Historically and dramatically interesting is Verdi's inclusion of the three powerful unison E's played twice by tutti

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[43]The theme of this duet is quoted in the overture, played by two harps—the only instance of writing for harp duo in the opera.

brass at the beginning of the overture and Act II. They are highly reminiscent of the brass chords which announce the arrival of the Statue of the Commendatore in the final act of Mozart's Don Giovanni. Verdi's justification for their use is not so much to evoke a feeling of the supernatural (as in the Mozart score), but rather to call the audience to attention much in the manner of the three-fold knocking of the prompter in the Classical French theater.[44]

Special orchestral effects in La Forza del Destino are numerous. Preziosilla's famous "Rataplan" song of Act III, scene ii is accompanied by two side drums onstage with only a few measures of orchestral assistance to maintain the pitch. Verdi effects the Act III, scene i call to battle with a progressive orchestration of two, four, and finally six trumpets offstage. The nearby sounds of fighting in Act III, scene ii include dramatic utilization of offstage solo trumpet in the high register, sounding over an orchestral tutti sequence, rhythmically similar to the battle music in Act II of Simon Boccanegra. Finally, Verdi used an offstage organ in the prelude to the third scene of Act II to create the ecclesiastical atmosphere of the monastery.

The utilization of orchestral elements for dramatic purposes became progressively more important with each of Verdi's successive operas. Around the time of the revision of La Forza del Destino

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[44] Osborne, Operas, p. 372.

and during the composition of Aida, Verdi became conscious of a factor outside of his score which affected the sound of his orchestra—the seating arrangement of the players in the orchestra pit. This is evident in two letters written by Verdi around this time. The first letter, dated July 23, 1869 to his friend Francesco Florimo contains the following remarks:

> I should want your theater to adopt certain modifications, rendered indispensable by modern scores...and perhaps in the orchestra itself. To give you an example, how can you still tolerate the violas and cellos not being all together? How can there thus be attack, color, accent, etc., etc.? Besides that, the mass of the string instruments will lack body. This is a relic of times past when violas and cellos played in unison with the basses. Inexecrable customs! And apropos of customs, I want to tell you about one. When I went to Vienna, seeing all the double-basses together right in the middle of the orchestra, I (accustomed to seeing them scattered here and there) gave a great start of surprise and a certain little smile that would say "These pigs of Germans!" ("Toderi di Tedeschi," literally "These German squids!"). But when I descended into the orchestra and found myself before the double-basses, and heard their powerful attack, their precision, their neatness, their piani and their forti, etc., etc....I perceived that I was the todero, and I stopped smiling. From this you will understand my ideas about how the violas and cellos should be placed, which play such important parts in modern works.[45]

The second letter, to his publisher Giulio Ricordi and dated July 10, 1871, also illustrates the growing importance Verdi placed on the arrangement of his orchestra:

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[45] Quoted in translation in Frank Walker, "Verdi and Francesco Florimo—Some Unpublished Letters," Music and Letters (October, 1945), p. 115.

> The arrangement of the orchestra is much more important than is usually assumed, for the color mixtures of the instruments, for the sonority, for the effect. Such small improvements should pave the way for us to other innovations that will certainly come some day.[46]

Aida (1871) is one of the most interesting of Verdi's scores. For the only time in his career, the composer occupied himself with the creation of local color, and adapted the normal orchestral ensemble in an attempt to depict the exotic atmosphere of ancient Egypt.

In Aida, Verdi delved more deeply than ever before into the technical capabilities of the instruments. The score abounds in the instrumental devices and orchestral techniques that he had worked out so carefully through his long career. Through them, he was able to create such contrasting moods as the tropical evening mystery of the Nile scene, the martial spectacle of the triumphal march, and the gloomy despair of the final tomb scene. As well, Verdi manipulated his orchestra to portray poignant emotions such as the homesick nostalgia of Aida, the corrupt ambition of Ramfis, the bitter jealousy of Amneris, and the hopeless love and frustration of Radames and Aida.

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[46]"Questa collocazione d'orchestra è d'un'importanza ben maggiore di quello che comunemente si crede, per gl'impasti degli stromenti, per la sonorità e per l'effetto. Questi piccoli perfezionamenti apriranno poi la strada ad altre innovazioni, che verranno certamente un giorno." See Cesari and Luzio, I Copialettere, p. 264.

In this opera, Verdi employed a lavishness of orchestral forces as never before. In fact, for the very first time, he stipulated the exact number of strings he desired in the orchestra.[47] For the Cairo premiere of the opera, Verdi requested and received fourteen first violins, twelve second violins, twelve violas, twelve cellos, and twelve double basses (!). The augmented second violin, viola, cello, and bass sections reflect Verdi's new concept of string orchestration. No longer did the lower strings fulfill merely supporting and accompanying roles. In Aida, they became equal partners of the first violins in a much more contrapuntal texture.

Verdi's use of string sonorities and techniques in Aida is much advanced beyond his previous works. This is immediately evident in the Prelude to the opera, where two prominent themes are first presented. The first is the theme associated with Aida's love for Radames, played pianissimo by muted violins later joined by muted violas. This melody, which recurs throughout the opera, effectively portrays the sad longing of Aida for a love she cannot possess. The second theme represents the vindication of the high priests. This motive, based on a descending scale, is played by

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[47] The specifications were listed in a letter to his publisher Giulio Ricordi on April 11, 1871. See Werfel and Stefan, Verdi: The Man in his Letters, p. 301.

cellos coi sordini. At the end of the Prelude this theme is heard in conflict with fragments of Aida's theme. The dramatic idea is obvious but effective.

The opening of the opera displays the same style of four-part string writing that denoted a "conversation in progress" in La Forza del Destino. In this instance, the audience becomes party to the exchange between Radamés and Ramfis.

One of the most ethereal of all of Verdi's aria accompaniments occurs in Radames' famous Act I "Celeste Aida." Verdi accomplished this effect through the use of various string devices. The first verse is accompanied by a thin, transparent scoring of six muted violins tremolando in high register with pizzicati in the remaining tutti strings. The second verse uses six solo violins divisi in three parts (without mutes) and first violins of the tutti playing pianississimo staccato repeated-note figures leggerissimo. This texture is supported by pizzicato beats in the second violins, violas, and double basses while the cellos double the vocal part.

Verdi used a similar "shimmering" texture to accompany Aida's pleading phrase "Numi, pietà" at the end of her Act I, scene i aria "Ritorna vincitor" and again when this identical vocal phrase returns at the end of Act II, scene i following the Aida-Amneris duet. In both instances, violins, violas, and cellos play sustained tones tremolando, effectively indicating the inner turbulence of Aida's emotions.

This same effect is used once again by the composer in the final duet of Radames and Aida in the tomb, "O terra addio." First violins and cellos play tremolando upper harmonics with sustained harmonics played by the second violins. Violas and solo double bass play pizzicato first and third beats, completing the accompaniment of the duet's first stanza. The second verse uses divisi first violins and the cellos playing triadic leaps in harmonics, while the second violins, divisi e coi sordini, play high register tremolando. The solo bass and the violas continue their pizzicato punctuation. The third and final verse is sung over long tremolando tones played by the first violins, second violins, and violas (all divisi in two parts), with sustained harmonics in the cello part and occasional pizzicato beats in tutti basses. Harp and high register winds add a celestial quality to this setting, as the lovers bid farewell to the earth and talk of their union in heaven. Four muted solo violins conclude the opera by playing the opening phrase of "O terra addio," the theme ending on the highest note ever written by Verdi.[48]

Muted basses become melodic instruments in the Act IV, scene i judgement scene of Aida where they play nine measures of the solo theme associated with the priests. This melodic writing for tutti double basses in unison foreshadows the ominous

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[48]Travis, Verdi's Orchestration, p. 30.

double bass section interlude in the fourth act of Otello.

The most dramatically effective mood painting in Aida occurs in the Act III Nile scene, where Verdi employed four special string techniques simultaneously to create the mysterious tropical atmosphere inherent in the scene. Muted first violins play a repeating staccato sixteenth-note figure sounding G's in four consecutive octaves, ascending and then descending. Muted second violins alternate between sustained tremolando intervals of a perfect fourth and minor third. Violas, also muted, play a pizzicato figure consisting of three ascending eighth-note G's in three consecutive octaves, followed by an eighth rest. Divisi cellos sustain long harmonic pedals beneath this transparent orchestration.

Most of the Egyptian-like color in Aida is provided by the woodwinds, particularly the flute and piccolo.[49] One of the most conspicuous instances occurs in the introduction to the Act III Nile scene with an exotic triadic melody for solo flute above the string effects described above. The hollow, melancholy sonority of single flute here depicts the mystery of the evening and the sorrow of Aida. The flute theme continues through the brief opening dialogue between Ramfis and Amneris. As Aida enters,

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[49]Verdi had gone to Florence to examine an ancient Egyptian flute on display in a museum there. He had thought of using an actual Egyptian instrument for creating color but dismissed it as "a reed with four holes in it--like the ones our shepherds have." See Osborne, Operas, p. 425.

three flutes play her love motive as an introduction to her aria "O patria mia." The actual aria uses a solo oboe in a counter-melodic function, with the tremolando of the three flutes maintaining the feeling of intrigue and impending doom.

Verdi also used the three flutes to create an Egyptian atmosphere in the dance of the Priestesses in Act I, scene ii. Here, the instruments are scored staccato in three parts in the middle register, accompanied by simple string pizzicati. The detached chordal texture and the chromatic style of the flute parts create a very exotic effect.

Two solo flutes in combination with the clarinet and bassoon are largely responsible for the pleading quality of the "Pietà ti prenda del mio dolor" section of the Act II, scene i Amneris-Aida duet. The sorrowful quality of the solo oboe is utilized in the introduction to the desperate Radames-Aida duet "Là, tra foreste vergini" in Act III. Besides its routine orchestral duties, the solo clarinet is employed for its plaintive quality in many of the frequent statements of Aida's love motive. Solo bassoon is utilized to great effect in the Radames-Amneris duet of Act IV, scene i in which the embittered Princess tries to convince Radames to renounce his love for Aida. The dark sound of the bassoon arpeggi dramatically depict her jealousy and deceit.

In Aida for the first time, the bass clarinet and English horn are used to play inner parts within the woodwind section of the orchestra, as opposed to their purely solo function in Verdi's

earlier scores. Their addition to the woodwind ensemble, and thus to the orchestral tutti, creates a new richness of sonority.

Aida also contains prominent writing for brass ensemble, primarily associated with the military aspects of the plot. Examples occur in the fanfare for two trumpets and three trombones which introduces "Celeste Aida" in Act I, scene i and the fanfare scored for two trumpets, three trombones, four horns, and cimbasso heralding the king's entrance in the same scene. A backstage brass banda usually consisting of two trumpets and three trombones is heard near the end of Act II, scene i, playing the theme from the king's invocation to the troops "Su! del Nilo" in the preceding scene. The dramatic implication of the returning army in the distance is simple, yet immensely powerful as it interrupts the string and wind-dominated scene between Aida and Amneris.

The most unusual use of brass in the opera undoubtedly involves the six straight-bored Egyptian trumpets played sul palco[50] in the triumphal scene of Act II. Verdi had the instruments (three tuned in A-flat and three in B-natural) built in Milan and sent to Cairo for the premiere.

In the Judgement Scene of Act IV, scene i, Verdi used four trombones, four trumpets, and bass drum to punctuate the accusations of the priests in the offstage tomb. This effect, combined with the sporadic, contrasting outbursts of Amneris and the full pit

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[50]"On the stage."

orchestra, create a dramatic situation without comparison in Verdi's operas.

More intimate scoring for brass, though still connected with the military aspects of the plot, is also found in Aida. One such instance is the use of two trumpets leggerissimo e staccato in the Act III duet between Aida and Radames, where the young general tells Aida that she shall be his prize for his victory over the Ethiopians.

The solemnity of the priests' religious order is depicted by the noble sonority of three trombones accompanying their supplication in the temple at the end of Act I, scene ii. Verdi again used these three trombones as Ramfis and the priests return from the tomb after Radames' condemnation. Here they play a single, ominous, sustained tone beneath the priests' theme from the Prelude.

In Aida, the harp functions more as a martial instrument than as a celestial one. Examples of this occur in the march rhythm of two harps in the Act I, scene ii chorus of the priestesses and in the slaves' chorus in Amneris' chamber in Act II, scene i.

Verdi reserved the use of the gong or tam-tam for only two moments in the opera, both associated with the terrible realization of Radames' doom. The first is heard at the exact moment that he is condemned by Ramfis and the priests. Minutes later, as Amneris collapses in despair outside the tomb, Verdi called for one final death-like stroke on the gong with the last chord of the scene.

Simon Boccanegra, premiered in 1857 in Venice, was extensively revised by Verdi and Boito in 1881. The revised opera, which was first presented in Milan on March 24, has become the standard version for modern performances.

Due to its major alterations, Simon Boccanegra has the definite "feel" of Verdi's late period, strongly foreshadowing Otello and Falstaff. The composer set the work in a much more continuous musical style, further breaking down the discernible divisions between numbers.

The orchestral quality of Simon Boccanegra is dark, solemn, and gloomy, almost without relief. This is achieved orchestrally by Verdi's constant use of the low registers of the instruments, particularly the strings.

The opera opens with a Prologue in media res, Verdi again using the "conversation-in-progress" technique. The rising of the curtain finds Paolo and Pietro discussing their plan to name Simon Boccanegra as the first Doge of Genoa. Their scheming words are sung in a monotonic recitative style while strings in five parts play a gently-moving theme depicting the tranquil evening. The string melody used by Verdi here is very similar in movement and nature to the opening of Otello's third act where Otello and Iago discuss the supposed infidelity of Desdemona and Cassio.

The Prologue continues with another of Verdi's orchestral/dramatic trademarks—the stealthy, subdued, quick pizzicato strings associated with conspirators, abductors, and murderers. In the

Simon Boccanegra Prologue, the chorus of conspirators is introduced by a rising pizzicato figure played by the violins, violas, and cellos, touching the tonic and dominant of the chords only. Paolo informs the conspirators of past events in a scene reminiscent of Ferrando's story-telling in Il Trovatore. In Simon Boccanegra, however, the orchestral accompaniment is much more advanced, foreshadowing the "bonfire" music of Otello. The orchestra, with its active, independent movement, provides more of a dramatic background than a support for the voice part.

The strength and nobility of Fiesco is aptly illustrated by the orchestra upon his initial appearance. A majestic fortissimo unison figure, played four times by the low strings and punctuated each time by pianissimo brass chords immediately gives the impression of power and dignity. Throughout the opera, whenever Fiesco is involved, the composer used rich, low string sonorities with somber brass colors adding a further sense of refined strength. One other example of this particular tonal color association is evident in the scene where Fiesco gives his approval to the betrothal of Amelia and Gabriele. Here, Verdi accompanied Fiesco's blessing with soft, sustained brass chords, giving an almost religious feeling to the scene.

The opening of Fiesco's famous Prologue aria "Il lacerato spirito" is accompanied solely by mournful brass chords with intermittent "death" beats on side drum. Then, as he turns to Heaven for help, the orchestral color and dramatic direction of

the aria change. Fiesco's desperate plea to God is effectively accompanied by transparent tremolando strings, double bass pizzicato, and offstage chorus voices mourning the death of Maria. In a brief tremolando postlude to the aria, Verdi scored the solo trumpet on the second beat of each measure, giving the effect of a death-bell toll.

An impressive example of orchestral scene-painting is found in the short prelude to Act I, scene i. Verdi used muted violin trills, pianissimo high-register sextuplet figures played by the piccolo depicting various bird noises, and then a cantabile upper-range cello theme over tremolando violins and violas to create a musical picture of the sea at sunrise. The shimmering quality of the strings dramatically portrays the glistening reflection of the rising sun on the water.

This Prelude leads directly to Amelia's aria "Come in quest'ora bruna," where a continuous sextuplet figure played by the violins indicates the motion of waves rippling against the shore.

Another dramatic use of instrumental color in the aria is Verdi's use of sinister-sounding fifths scored for high winds as Amelia remembers her murdered nurse's dying words.

As had been his custom since the beginning of his career, Verdi again made use of individual instrumental colors in order to create a specific emotional feeling. In Simon Boccanegra this device is evident in several passages. The plaintive tone of the solo oboe introduces Amelia's sorrowful aria "Orfanella il tetto

umile" in which she tells Boccanegra of her life without parents. The oboe, always one of Verdi's favorite instruments to depict melancholy and sadness, is again employed in Gabriele's recitative before his pleading Act II aria "Cielo pietoso rendila." Here, the desperate youth contemplates killing Boccanegra in order to secure his freedom. The nasal, mournful quality of the oboe effectively depicts Gabriele's hopeless situation.

Again, in the final scene of the opera, the oboe lends its peculiar tonal color to the creation of an atmosphere of sorrow and sadness as Fiesco learns too late that Amelia is really his granddaughter. To Fiesco's words "Piango, perchè mi parla in te del ciel la voce," the oboe and divisi violas play Verdi's conventional semitone falling and rising figures depicting weeping.

The dark tonal color of the bass clarinet adds a threatening quality to the scene in which Boccanegra lays the curse upon Paolo in the Council Chamber. This entire scene, new to the 1881 version, is a masterful example of dramatic utilization of the orchestra. The fierce tutti opening is remarkably similar to the Otello storm music--understandably so, since Verdi was occupied with the composition of that opera at the time of the Simon Boccanegra revision.

As the Doge calls Paolo forward to deliver his curse, Verdi scored a fortissimo brass unison motive which spans four octaves and ends on a violent trill for every instrument in the pit. One cannot help but notice the similarity between this passage and

the opening of Iago's "Credo." As Boccanegra tells Paolo that he knows the name of the traitor, the motive is repeated three times by bassoon, cellos, and violas, with agitated violins tremolando adding to the tension of the confrontation. As the chorus repeats the curse "sia maledetto," the cello and bass clarinet play three long, low F-sharps, indicative of a death knell.

Another dramatic incident in the opera which is effectively emphasized by orchestral support is the poisoning of Boccanegra in Act II. First, there is the eerie, syncopated three-note chromatic phrase in octaves, played pianissimo by the clarinet and the bassoon against the dull thud of bass drum and cello and double bass pizzicato as Paolo pours the poison into Boccanegra's cup. Later in the same scene, as Boccanegra pours himself a cup of water, the double bass pizzicati return, accompanied by tension-building drum rolls and pianissimo brass chords. As he unwittingly drinks the poison, the trombones play a sudden fortissimo chord, pointing out the now-assured doom of Boccanegra.

Simon Boccanegra contains many examples of purely instrumental effects. The tolling death bell at the end of the opera, the joyous ringing of offstage chimes as Boccanegra is proclaimed Doge at the end of the Prologue, the many instances of backstage banda fanfares, the sul palco trumpet call as the Captain of the Archers reads the proclamation in Act III, the use of two offstage snare drums in the citizens' call to arms ending Act II, and the harp that accompanies the Act I, scene i Manrico-like serenade of

Gabriele are all examples of such devices.

One last technique, used previously by the composer in Rigoletto, is the bocca chiusa humming of offstage chorus, here indicating the rioting populace in the distance in Act I, scene ii. As the crowd approaches, the hum becomes a sustained sung "ah."

Another major example of operatic revision is Verdi's Don Carlo, originally a French opera in five acts. It was premiered in that form at the Paris Opéra on March 11, 1867. In 1884 a largely revised and shortened Italian version of the opera was given its first performances at La Scala in Milan. Verdi rewrote much of the music, re-orchestrated many scenes, and completely omitted the first act (the scene at Fontainebleau) and the third-act ballet. A further revision in 1887 restored the work's first act; it is this version which has become the standard one for performances in the world's major opera houses in the last few decades.

Don Carlo requires the largest Verdi orchestra to this date. Included are three flutes (the third flute player doubling on the piccolo), English horn, four bassoons, contrabassoon, two trumpets and two cornets, four timpani, and harmonium. For the first time, Verdi indicated the specific instrument he desired to provide the bass brass notes. Instead of the usual nebulous

cimbasso marking, the composer called for the ophicleide,[51] a type of woodwind tuba very common in the Paris Opéra orchestra.

The most prominent orchestral element in the Don Carlo score is Verdi's growing preoccupation with the use of woodwind sonorities for dramatic purposes, both in ensemble and individually. Of the instances of this treatment in Don Carlo, it will suffice to cite a few representative examples.

The solo clarinet plays an important role as it comments melodically in the recitative to Don Carlo's hopeful aria "Io la vidi e al suo sorriso" as he anticipates seeing his betrothed for the first time. Moments later, as Elisabetta reflects on her love for Don Carlo ("Di qual amor—di quanto ardor quest'alma e piena"), the clarinet is again prominent with accompanimental arpeggios supported by pizzicato string chords.

The brief orchestral opening to the second scene of Act II creates the mood of a lazy, exotic Spanish afternoon, chiefly through the use of piccolo and triangle—used in a manner similar to that in Aida. The piccolo, playing a sustained piano passage

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[51] This instrument combines the funnel-shaped mouthpiece of brass instruments with a wood body and woodwind finger-hole system. The rarity of the ophicleide results in the use of tuba in most modern performances. One well-known example of its use is as the instrumental representation of Bottom in Mendelssohn's A Midsummer Night's Dream. See Percy Scholes, ed., The Oxford Companion to Music, 10th edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 257.

and doubled an octave lower by solo oboe, is featured in the women's chorus that follows. This piece, in which the ladies of the court sing of their peaceful surroundings, also demonstrates a violin technique (in rudimentary form) that would play an important function in the "fire music" of Otello. In a series of constantly-repeated eighth notes, the first violins bow the on-beat eighth notes while the off-beat eighths are echoed by pizzicato second violins.

Verdi's "weeping" semi-tone figure is heard often in Don Carlo--played by the solo flute and the oboe as Don Carlo pleads with Elisabetta to intervene for him with Philip in Act II, scene i; in Act II, scene ii by the English horn as Elisabetta comforts the banished Countess in her aria "Non pianger, mia compagna"; and, as Rodrigo tells Carlo of the miseries suffered by the people of Flanders, again played by the solo oboe. This final example of the "sobbing" motive is significant as it emerges from a much more complex orchestration than usual with moving, independent string passages disguising it.

A purely instrumental use of this semi-tone figure is found in the opening to Act IV, which begins with three ponderous and melancholy A's, each preceded by an ascending grace note. Verdi scored this fully for strings, four horns, and four bassoons over a span of two octaves giving the impression of masculine sorrow. The motive is assumed by the solo flute in the opening of Philip's famous monologue "Ella giammai m'amò," with the "sighing" A's

continuing in the upper register of the solo oboe during the second section of the aria.

In Act IV, scene ii, the plaintive quality of the solo oboe is once more employed to depict the despair of Don Carlo in prison as it plays a reprise of the famous Rodrigo-Don Carlo duet theme ("Dio, che nell'alma infondere") from Act II, scene i.

Some of the most dramatic orchestration in the opera is found in the instances where Verdi has scored for low-register woodwinds in combination with brass and strings. These sections most successfully portray the dark and gloomy atmosphere which pervades the entire work.

The most obvious and perhaps the most effective of these orchestral mood-paintings is the menacing passage that introduces the Grand Inquisitor and runs throughout his _parlante_ dialogue with Philip in Act IV. The chromatic theme is played by the bassoon and cellos, doubled by the contrabassoon and double bass an octave lower. This passage is accompanied by sinister thumps of bass drum, echoed by timpani, and punctuated by _piano_ syncopated chords in the trombone trio. The scene is similar in melody, rhythm, orchestral coloring, and even key to the confrontation between Rigoletto and Sparafucile in the second scene of _Rigoletto_.

The somber, religious atmosphere of the cloister at San Giusto in Act II, scene i and Act V is dramatically depicted in short orchestral preludes to both scenes scored for four bassoons, four horns, three trombones, and ophicleide.

This same ensemble of instruments, or a part of it, is used to accompany the bass voice of the "mysterious" monk/ghost of Charles V in Acts II and V. Also in these scenes, the ominous chanting of the monks is supported by a dark, subdued orchestration of violas, cellos, bassoons, trombones, and ophicleide.

The gloomy unison march theme of the monks in Act II, scene ii as they lead the victims of the Inquisition to the stake is orchestrated in an equally dark and ponderous manner—solo bassoon, three unison trombones sustaining low G-sharp, and cello pizzicato doubling the bowed tones of two solo double basses.

A notable example of Verdi's masterful string writing occurs in the short orchestral prelude to Act III, scene i based on the theme of Don Carlo's "Io la vidi e al suo sorriso" from Act I. Violins divisi a 4, solo cello in the high register, and pianissimo legato phrases played by the piccolo create a translucent texture which sets the moonlit atmosphere for the scene that follows.

Elisabetta and Don Carlo reaffirm their hopeless love in the Act II, scene ii duet beginning "Perduto ben, mio sol tesor," and Verdi created a hushed quality in the orchestra by using violin harmonics, pianissimo flute trio, single harp tones, and the English horn doubling Elisabetta's sorrowful vocal line.

As he had done with Oscar in Un Ballo in Maschera, Verdi brought light relief to Don Carlo in the music of Tebaldo the Page, where high, trill-ornamented string writing combined with the piccolo is prominent. Due to the overpowering heaviness of the

Don Carlo plot, however, Tebaldo plays a less important part in this opera than Oscar does in Un Ballo in Maschera.

Special orchestral effects in Don Carlo include the accompaniment by the harp and harmonium of the offstage "Celestial Voice" in Act III, scene ii. In Verdi's treatment of this supernatural phenomenon he momentarily regressed to the primitive theatrics of Giovanna d'Arco.

The opening of the opera illustrates another special effect with Verdi's use of five offstage horns depicting the distant hunt, three horns in E-flat from stage left answering two horns in B-flat on stage right.

The military banda which accompanies the Act III, scene i procession from the palace, and the ever-present backstage chimes complete Verdi's collection of special instrumental effects in Don Carlo.

Verdi's last opera Falstaff was premiered at La Scala on February 9, 1893—some fifty-four years after the premiere of his first opera Oberto, Conte di San Bonfacio in the same theater. Falstaff was Verdi's second attempt at comic opera and is generally considered to be a musical and dramatic masterpiece.

For years Verdi had been trying to break down the traditional rules which governed the use of orchestral instruments. In Falstaff he attained his greatest freedom in this respect, each instrument being used according to the composer's uncanny knowledge of the resulting sound and dramatic effect.

Verdi's orchestra provides a running commentary on the dramatic action of the opera. Although the voice is still the most important element in the score, the orchestra has attained a fresh, new role. It does more than simply delineate characters and situations. More than in any other Verdi opera, the orchestra in Falstaff highlights and emphasizes the human emotions which underlie the dramatic progression.

Scholars repeatedly describe the orchestration of Falstaff as "chamber-like." In truth, however, the Falstaff orchestra is quite large, differing from the Aida orchestra only in that the latter contains one more harp and one less trumpet. If, on the other hand, a chamber music quality can be inferred by a texture in which each component or instrument is given an opportunity to make an individual contribution to the total sonority without being drowned out by the remaining forces, then Falstaff must indeed be considered to have a "chamber" orchestration. Within this precise, transparent orchestration is displayed a far wider range of orchestral and individual instrumental expression.

The most numerous and most prominent solo instrumentation involves the woodwind family. Verdi's use of the piccolo in Falstaff is without parallel, conjuring up a wide variety of moods. For example, it creates an atmosphere of frivolity and brilliance as in the exuberant opening of Act I, scene ii, where the piccolo dominates the ensemble with a playful theme doubled by the flutes and supported by the horns, oboes, and clarinets, as well as in the brief Act III, scene ii "Fairy Dance" where a piccolo melody

echoes a tune played by the solo violin. The piccolo adds a note of sarcasm as it doubles the oboe two octaves above when Dame Quickly relates to Meg and Alice how the pompous Falstaff was taken in by her "act" at the Garter Inn. A sparkling lyricism is created by the piccolo's bright tonal quality in the accompaniment to Falstaff's "Madrigal" in Act II, scene i.

As the Merry Wives organize their chorus of elves and nymphs around the fainted Falstaff in the final scene of the opera, the piccolo creates ominous tension in combination with a sustained texture of muted strings, flutes, trombones, and solo cello and harp harmonics. In a similar sustained texture, the piccolo contributes an intense eeriness as Quickly tells the story of the "Black Hunter."

Another instrument that reached its greatest prominence in Verdi's late works was the English horn. In Falstaff this instrument, with its dark, mournful, nasal tone is utilized to great extent. Verdi's employment of the English horn differs from that of many of his predecessors, who seemed to reserve this instrument for the creation of idyllic and pastoral effects. Verdi most often used the English horn's plaintive and haunting quality to depict sorrow and longing in love. Amelia's "Ma dall'arido stela divulsa," Aida's "O Patria Mia" and Desdemona's "Salce" immediately come to mind. In Falstaff it is in Fenton's Act III, scene ii aria "Dal labbro il canto estasiato vola" that the English horn participates in a melodic dialogue with the young lover as he

reflects on his frustrated love for Nanetta.

Another effect created by Verdi's English horn, and often used in combination with the above romantic expression, is that of nocturnal mystery. Amelia's Act II aria from Un Ballo in Maschera is again a fine example. The atmosphere of eerie mystery inferred by the gallows at midnight is dramatically aided by the timbre of the solo English horn. Fenton's scene in Windsor Park is also set at midnight and the almost supernatural uneasiness which foretells the evening's proceedings is communicated by the English horn. Later in this same scene, as the nymphs, fairies, and elves begin to appear, the English horn combines with the oboe and clarinet in a mystical "horn-call" figure played over pianississimo tremolando chords for violins and violas.

The nasal quality of the English horn is also used to create humorous effects, as in the parlante reading of Falstaff's identical love letters to Meg and Alice in Act I, scene ii. Here, the instrument provides sardonic commentary as the wives make fun of Falstaff's impetuosity. Along with bass clarinet, horn, and bassoon, it becomes a member of the bass wind ensemble that accompanies the pseudo-religious litany "Domine fallo casto" in the second scene of Act III, where the wives mockingly pray for Falstaff's soul.

In Falstaff, Verdi turned his famous "weeping" woodwind figure into a comic device. When Quickly exaggeratedly tells Falstaff that Alice "weeps and moans" in Act III, scene i, her

story is punctuated with the semitone motive played by the solo oboe and clarinet.

As might be expected, the buffo nature of the Falstaff score entails varied use of the deep timbre of bassoon. A good example of this is the humor evoked by the staccato low-register bassoon melody that accompanies Falstaff's pathetic wooing of Alice in Act II, scene ii. The instrument also contributes a gruff quality to the scheming of Bardolfo, Pistol, Ford, Fenton, and Caius in the second scene of the opera. In the same scene, Bardolfo and Pistol warn Ford of Falstaff's designs on his wife and Verdi scored an ominous sequence in the dark tones of clarinets, bassoons, cellos, and violas with double bass and bass trombone sustaining below.

In the first scene of the opera a comical but slightly sinister quality is created by a fanfare figure played by clarinet, bassoon, bass trombone, and horns, as Pistol and Bardolfo acclaim their master Falstaff as a great lover.

In the famous Honor Monologue of Act I, scene i, Falstaff's emphatic "No's" in answer to his own questions are doubled by unison D's in clarinet in lowest register, bassoon, and two solo double basses an octave lower pizzicato and scordatura. Verdi used scordatura only in Ernani and in two instances in Falstaff.

An excellent example of divisi string writing is evident in the beautiful accompaniment to Nanetta's "Fairy Queen's Song" in the second scene of Act III. First and second violins are each

divided into three parts in a shimmering texture equal in dramatic effectiveness to the opening of Aida's Nile Scene and the beginning of the first act of Simon Boccanegra. Half of the first violins play high-register sustained harmonics, while the remaining first violins are divisi a 2 and muted, playing a staccatissimo sextuplet figure. This ethereal texture is doubled an octave lower by half of the second violins divisi and muted, with the other desks of the second violins playing muted trills. Verdi used pianissisimo harp harmonics[52] and the bass clarinet to decorate Nanetta's vocal line. This transparent orchestration effectively depicts the supernatural mystique of the fairies, elves, and nymphs.

The brass are used prominently in Falstaff, as shown in the loud unison semitone played by four horns, then two horns, and finally single horn as the wives prepare to dump the laundry basket containing Falstaff into the Thames River. Four horns also effectively double Fenton's soaring line in the final ensemble of Act I. The unfamiliar A-flat basso horn is heard offstage depicting the distant call of the forest warden in Act III, scene ii. Verdi presumably called for this lower-pitched instrument for its deeper, more haunting quality, but the common

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[52] In Verdi's manuscript he indicates pppppp. The first publication, however, reduced the marking to a more reasonable pianissisimo. See Hughes, Famous Verdi Operas, p. 517.

horn in F is usually used because of the rarity of the other instrument.

The horn had also been used since Mozart's Le Nozze di Figaro to symbolize cuckoldry. Nowhere is this better exemplified than in Ford's "Vengeance" monologue "L'ora e fissato" where horns dominate the texture as Ford vows to make a fool of Falstaff. Effective brass ensemble scoring is found in Act III, scene i as Quickly relates the legend of the "Black Hunter" to Falstaff accompanied by a mysterious orchestration of sustained pianississimo solo horn and piccolo, sinister thumps for bass drum, and ominous sustained low notes for trumpets, trombones, and the remaining three horns.

One of the most ingenious, yet simple dramatic characterizations in the opera is the warming effect of the wine in Falstaff's veins in Act III, scene i. Following his "bath" in the Thames, Falstaff returns to the Garter Inn and soliloquizes about his misery as he drinks his wine. The liquor's effect is portrayed orchestrally by a single trill beginning in the three flute parts. Then two solo first violins, two solo second violins, and two solo violas join the trill followed quickly by the addition of one oboe, one clarinet, one bassoon, and two solo cellos. Next, the first violins are increased to four, the seconds are augmented to six, the violas to four, and the cellos to four. Then the trill grows to include the full body of strings, piccolo, second bassoon, three trumpets and timpani. Finally, with the addition of four trombones and bass drum, the wine has totally invaded the body

and mind of Falstaff, aurally depicted by a tutti orchestral trill.

Special effects in Falstaff include the twelve offstage chimes in the Windsor Park scene, each harmonized differently by the strings, creating an eerie atmosphere. A guitar is played offstage to mimic Quickly's lute playing in Act II, scene ii. Hughes has noted that in Verdi's original manuscript, the composer used five and even six of the guitar's strings, whereas in the printed score, the "lute" piece has been simplified to cover only four strings.[53]

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[53] Ibid., p. 502.

CHAPTER III

THE DRAMATIC FUNCTION OF ORCHESTRATION IN OTELLO

> ...when we come to consider a music-drama of the calibre of Verdi's Otello we are venturing into so profound a merging of the two worlds—the musical and the dramatic—that we have to persuade ourselves that we are experts on both, for here they are inextricably intertwined.[1]

Following the completion of his Requiem in 1874, Verdi lived in virtual retirement for the remainder of the decade, composing only the String Quartet and some alterations for Don Carlo. With operas like Thomas' Hamlet, Gounod's Romeo et Juliette and Meyerbeer's L'Africaine becoming the rage in Europe, it is possible that Verdi began to suspect that he was no longer "in vogue" or, as he frequently put it, "dans le mouvement."

During the mid- and late-seventies, operas such as Ponchielli's La Gioconda, Marchetti's Ruy Blas, and the revised Boito Mefistofele were introducing Italian audiences to a new style of continuous dramatic composition. In 1876 Wagner opened his Festspielhaus in Bayreuth with the first complete performance of Der Ring des Nibelungen. French composers such as Massenet and Bizet were experimenting with new, innovative methods of orchestration.

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[1] Vincent Godefroy, The Dramatic Genius of Verdi, Vol. II (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1977), p. 250.

In a letter to his friend Francesco Florimo dated January 5, 1871, Verdi advised "...don't go much to modern operas" and warned Florimo against being "seduced" by the extravagant new styles of orchestration.[2] One can sense, however, that Verdi was uneasy about being left behind by new developments in his art. As he pondered these fears, he tinkered with revisions to Don Carlo and Simon Boccanegra, postponing facing the problem of how to present the world with a new opera acceptable to contemporary thinking.

It was through a collaboration with Arrigo Boito, at the time considered among the avant-garde, that Verdi finally succeeded in this task. The librettist's brilliant setting of the Otello text created the standard for Verdi's musical and orchestral approach to the work. Boito's verses seem to have dictated the declamatory and dramatic style that Verdi adopted.

The compositional and orchestral techniques in Otello are not revolutionary departures from Verdi's style, however; they are rather a culmination of an existing ideal--the perfection of already established procedures developed in the course of his long career. Otello displays a mastery of fusion of voice and orchestra, a perfect blend of recitative and aria, and a continuity of drama unrivalled in his previous works.

In accordance with the higher level of participation to which the orchestra was raised in Otello, Verdi's orchestral language

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[2]See Cesari and Luzio, I Copialettere, p. 232.

attained its ultimate dramatic effectiveness.

Act One

The curtain rises immediately, revealing a savage storm in progress.[3] This scene is a masterpiece of dramatic writing--the culmination of the numerous storm scenes Verdi had written before. The syncopated churning of brass[4] and woodwinds and the furious rising and falling arpeggi for violins and violas that depict the swirling sea, the sudden flashes of lightning indicated by brief downward arpeggiated figures in the piccolo, flute, and clarinet parts, and the oscillating horn semitones that create the howling sea wind all combine to present the aural effect of a raging tempest. To these conventional devices Verdi added the unsettling presence of sustained tremolando timpani, two bass drums, and cymbals (played with timpani sticks), with an initial stroke of the tam-tam to signal that some form of danger or evil is present.

Possibly the most interesting element of the storm orchestration, however, is Verdi's inclusion of a cluster of three low organ pedal tones--C, C-sharp, and D (Example 1). This drone,

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[3] Otello is the first Verdi opera to begin without any musical mood-setting preamble such as an overture or prelude. Godefroy, Verdi, Vol. II, p. 257.

[4] Although there is no specific indication in the score, according to Hughes, Verdi originally intended the three tenor trombone parts to be played on valve instruments, allowing them to play rapid scale passages and trills. See Hughes, Famous Verdi Operas, p. 431.

marked "mettera il registro dei contrabassi e timpani,"[5] provides a menacing foundation for the storm sequence, which lasts for the first 225 measures of the opera.

One of the striking differences between the Otello storm music and most of its predecessors is the natural fluctuation in the intensity of the storm. It is not portrayed at gale force all the time, but rather varies from fierce outbursts to subdued, restless lulls. Verdi's score clearly indicates these various levels of intensity. The furious peaks of the storm are relayed through thickly-textured orchestrations which contain many fast-moving rhythms. The moments of relative tranquillity are created by sustained, sparsely-orchestrated passages which feature many instances of solo wind writing. One example occurs two measures before [A][6] where chromatic triplet "wind" figures played by the solo oboe and flute dominate the transparent orchestral texture (Example 2).

At [A] the first voices are heard in the opera as tenors and basses catch sight of a ship in the distance. Nine measures later the opening tutti crash returns. A solo trumpet is heard offstage two measures after [B] sounding three fanfare-like D's and a single cannon shot, prepared by a vicious staccato downward

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[5]"To be played in the same register of the double basses and timpani."

[6]All Rehearsal numbers refer to Otello, full orchestral score (Milan: Ricordi, c1913).

chromatic sixteenth-note scale played by oboes, bassoons, and strings indicates the battle in the harbour between the Cypriot and Turkish fleets.

The agitated atmosphere of the scene is further heightened by a pianissisimo molto staccato triplet figure in violins, violas, and cellos which Verdi introduced seven measures after [B] (Example 3). This subdued yet constant rhythmic motion contributes an underlying uneasiness to the scene.

At [C] the restlessness of the storm-tossed sea is reiterated by rising sixteenth-note chromatic scales for the bassoons, cellos, and double basses punctuated by "lightning flashes" in the high woodwind parts.

Five measures before [D] the dramatic tension is again increased as bassoons, cellos, and basses begin a driving ostinato figure of four falling sixteenth notes which continues for four-and-a-half measures over a sustained trombone trill with tremoli in the timpani and bass drum parts.

The opposition of orchestral lulls and outbursts continues. At [E], the four measures of choral prayer "Fende l'etra un torvo e cieco spirto di vertigine" (accompanied by high, sustained tremolando strings, organ pedals, and doubled by four bassoons and three trombones) are answered by a two-measure downward rush of chromatic sixteenth notes played by the piccolo, flutes, oboes, clarinets, and upper strings. The prayer is taken up again with the words "Iddio scuote il ciel bieco" and once more it is cut

short by the storm's fury indicated by the heavily-orchestrated, plunging scale passage.

Three measures before [G], the storm again subsides into long, sustained notes with an ominous quarter-note "wind" figure in horns marked come un lamento, while Verdi's "weeping" semitones are played by the bassoons, cellos, and double basses (Example 4).

Four measures before [H], the staccato triplets reappear in the strings, indicating another building of the storm's intensity. The tempest and the battle break out in full fury at [H] with a series of unison quarter notes for cornets, trumpets, and tenor trombones--playing first seven F-sharps, then seven B's a fourth higher, and finally seven E's above that. The dramatic "war-call" effect of these fortissimo blasts is made even more ferocious by the inclusion of three rising grace-notes to each of the quarter notes. Four horns play in unison with the cornets, trumpets, and trombones on the first seven quarter notes and a fourth below them on the remaining fourteen tones, but without the acciaccatura preparations.

This leads to the powerful tutta forza homophonic prayer "Dio, fulgor della bufera" seven measures after [H]. The third measure of the passage is punctuated by trills played by the cornets, trumpets, and trombones followed in the next measure by descending triplets. The choral prayer is taken up once more, and again it is interrupted by the brass.

Thirteen measures before [K], there occurs another lull in

the storm, this time in order to expose (for the first time) the evil character of Iago. As the ensign tells Roderigo that he hopes that Otello's ship sinks ("L'alvo frenetico del mar sia la sua tomba"), Verdi accompanied the descending vocal phrase with high tremolando violins and violas punctuated by accented off-beat descending quarter notes in the basson, cello, and double bass parts, made all the more foreboding with the addition of two preparatory acciaccature (Example 5).

Four measures before [K], however, the populace declares Otello's ship saved. The agitato staccato triplet figure returns in the strings as the ship prepares to dock. The soft, nervous pulse effectively portrays the ship's crew scurrying about their duties. The figure is made even more frantic in its setting against duple staccato eighth notes played by the bassoons. The triplet pulse culminates three measures before [L] with repeated triplet G-sharps for tutti orchestra which gradually diminish in dynamics and descend through four octaves. These fanfare-style repeated tones herald the entrance of the triumphant Otello with his famous salutation "Esultate! L'orgoglio musulmano sepolto è in mar." This powerful vocal phrase is scored with great economy of means. It is accompanied only by sustained horns punctuated by occasional forte arpeggio or heavily-accented double-stopped chords in the string parts.

Verdi took special care to highlight the voice in this section of near recitative because it provides the listener's first

impression of Otello. It is possibly the most striking example of the declamatory style in the opera.

Otello is greeted with a chorus of "Eviva," and the music breaks into a lively 6/8 Allegro vivace at the fourth measure after [M]. The first four measures of this section contain a repeated fanfare flourish for cornets and trumpets as Otello enters the fortress. The storm, though greatly subsided, continues with sporadic bass drum tremoli and the persistent distant rumbling of the organ pedals.

An agitated "Victory Chorus" begins at [N]. The light, dance-like accompaniment, consisting only of fragmentary three-note staccato figures played by the oboes, clarinets, and bassoons (still with the organ drone) is a dramatic contrast to what has come before. With its quick, detached nature, this music is similar to Verdi's conspirators' and murderers' music in such operas as Rigoletto, Macbeth, and Un Ballo in Maschera.

After a final "Eviva" at [R], the storm begins to subside, the organ pedals becoming gradually quieter[7] and the piccolo and oboe "lightning" figures becoming fainter. The strings mark the end of the storm with descending pizzicato tonic and dominant notes in the final three measures before [T]. As the organ finally

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[7] Verdi marked the organ part "Levare qualche registro dell'organo per fare più piano"—"Use softer registration on the organ."

ceases its cluster drone at [T], the chorus sings a morendo E major cadence on the words "Si calma la bufera."

A recitativo scene between Iago and Roderigo follows, in which Iago reveals his hate for Otello and arouses Roderigo's jealousy. The most interesting musical point in this scene is a brief, deceptively light-hearted passage scored for flutes, clarinets, and first violins doubling Iago's detached vocal line and the remaining strings deployed in a simple bass-chord-bass-chord dance accompaniment (Example 6). Verdi's use of a good-natured dance style to accompany Iago's words is a stroke of dramatic genius. Throughout the opera, Iago achieves his ends by appealing to Otello as a concerned comrade and friend. The happy dance tune in this first scene is an indication by Verdi that Iago is not what he appears to be.

This short passage is immediately followed by an abrupt downward leap of an octave in the orchestra, the upper note preceded by a rising grace-note (Example 7). This figure is used throughout the work as a punctuating gesture to emphasize Iago's statements.

The Allegro beginning eight measures before [X] depicts the flickering of the bonfire flames through falling and rising sixteenth-note arpeggi played by the first violins, echoed for one beat by an upward arpeggio in the bassoon part (Example 8). This "flame" figure is utilized throughout the chorus scene that follows—"Fuoco di gioia."

Although this famous scene is a choral one, its main interest is found in the orchestra. It is a brilliant scherzo movement in which Verdi demonstrated some original scoring techniques and masterly writing for woodwinds and strings. The most effective piece of scoring occurs in the eighth measure after [AA], in a series of rapidly alternating staccato bowed and pizzicato notes played by the violins. These figures portray the dancing sparks rising from the bonfire of the victorious Cypriots (Example 9).

Another remarkable aspect of the orchestration of this piece is Verdi's inclusion of a pianissimo ringing of cymbals during some of the soft woodwind passages, adding a subtle touch of exotic coloring to the scene. The joyful atmosphere is also conveyed in the fifth measure after [BB] by pianississimo leggerissimo e staccato constant sixteenth-note figures played by the first violins and the piccolo, accompanied by detached pianissimo wind chords and pianissimo pizzicato notes in the remaining string parts (Example 10).

Seven measures before [CC], one-beat fragments of the arpeggiated "flickering" figure appear sporadically in the solo bassoon, oboe, and flute parts and then in the piccolo, violin, and cello parts. These isolated figures, combined with two descending pizzicato viola notes followed by two more falling pizzicato notes for cellos and double basses together, dramatically indicate the dying fire.

A repeated pizzicato figure is immediately taken up by the

violas in the second measure after [CC], providing a light-hearted continuity with the following scene in which Iago initiates his scheme by getting Cassio drunk.

Verdi used the same upward sixteenth-note arpeggio figures that represented the flames in the previous scene to indicate the "fire" of the wine in Cassio's veins. The figure is first played by the cellos in the third measure of [CC] and then by the piccolo and oboes in octaves eight measures later. As Cassio's senses are progressively dulled by the liquor, the one-beat figure is played by the flute, piccolo, oboe, and clarinet together in the third and second measures before [DD].

Cassio continues to drink, and Iago, sotto voce, advises Roderigo to pick a fight with the intoxicated Captain, in a recitativo conversation accompanied by sustained string chords at [DD].

An explosive Allegro con brio beginning eighteen measures before [EE] serves as an attention-getting introduction to Iago's famous brindisi "Inaffia l'ugola." In the ninth measure of the brief introduction, a three-measure unison passage with alternating staccato and legato figures is played (Example 11). This is followed by a series of falling diminuendo arpeggiated figures played by oboes and first violins for one measure, then by second violins and clarinets for one measure, and finally the meter changes to an ominous-sounding 6/8 "vamp" for bassoon and alternating pizzicato and arco notes in the cello and double bass parts.

A further sense of evil is conveyed by a single rising grace note on the off-beat bowed pulses.

Throughout the song, Verdi incorporated the now-characteristic octave drop with preceding grace note to emphatically punctuate Iago's narrative—both in the voice part and in the orchestral accompaniment. It is not the typical, frivolous drinking song of Italian operatic convention but rather a calculating vehicle designed by Iago to bring about the downfall of Cassio. His foul intentions are indicated by his twelve-measure verse in the foreboding instrumental colors of cello, double bass, and bassoon. Cassio's eight-measure legato reply is scored for full strings, solo flute, oboe and clarinet, bassoons, and horns in a passage that portrays the Captain's naiveté.

Iago then begins a detached, marcato refrain of twenty-two measures, again dominated by dark instrumentation with the added nasal quality of the solo oboe. Iago's foul nature is underlined by Verdi's inclusion of a mocking trill for voice, flute, oboe, and first violins eight measures before [FF]. The refrain ends with a striking series of three "slithering" chromatic descending runs on the words "beva con me" in the voice part, doubled by the violins, violas, cellos, solo clarinet, bassoon, and horn (Example 12). In the tenth measure after [FF], the refrain is repeated by the chorus with an orchestral tutti accompaniment that includes violins, flutes, horns, oboes, piccolo, solo cornet and solo trombone doubling the vocal melody.

The second verse follows the same form as the first including Iago's refrain and its repetition by the chorus with an augmented orchestration. Verse three begins in the fifth measure after [II]. Cassio is by now completely inebriated and interrupts Iago's verse after only three measures. Three measures later, Iago cuts back in, but is again interrupted by the tipsy Cassio after two measures. Iago then attempts to start the refrain anew but Cassio breaks in every second measure. Tension builds with constant staccato triplets played by the violas, cellos, and bassoons twelve measures before [JJ], assumed by the violins, double basses, cornets, and horns five measures before [JJ] as the chorus laughs at the drunken Cassio.

At [JJ] Cassio tries to begin the verse but breaks off after only one measure, unable to remember the words. This is accompanied by short, disjointed staccato wind figures and high string pizzicato leaps which effectively convey the unsteady, intoxicated state of Cassio. Six measures before [KK] and again two measures before [KK], Verdi scored a measure-long downward chromatic sixteenth-note run in the flute, violin, and piccolo parts depicting the drunken staggering of Cassio. At [KK] the chorus sings a fortissimo version of the "bevi con me" ending of the refrain accompanied by a four-measure coda for orchestral tutti complete with trills in piccolo, flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, cornets, trumpets, and full strings.

The 6/8 meter continues into the next scene of the opera,

the confrontation between Cassio and Montano. Here, the orchestration builds gradually as Montano discovers that Cassio is incapable of his duty. Goaded by Roderigo and Iago, Cassio draws his sword and a duel with Montano ensues, the music constantly growing in agitation and excitement as the scene unfolds.

The furious action ceases abruptly with Otello's unaccompanied command "Abbasso le spade," followed by an emphatic tutta forza chord and a long dramatic pause. Violins, violas, and cellos then thunder out a loud, staccato rising six-note figure in unison (with double basses an octave lower) indicative of Otello's rage (Example 13). He angrily asks three questions which Verdi left without accompaniment, punctuating the first two, however, with heavily accented chordal interjections in the strings. The final question is followed by the rising six-note figure of Example 13 played by strings and one final chord for orchestral tutti. Then, as Otello's anger momentarily wanes, he turns to "onesto" Iago and asks what has happened. This change of mood is supported by a single sustained chord in the strings.

Iago now gathers his thoughts in a measure of silence. At [PP], he begins his story in short fragmented phrases with pianississimo pizzicato chordal interjections played during the hesitations in his narrative, representing the scheming thoughts in his mind before he speaks them. Otello's anger again aroused, he turns to Cassio and demands an explanation, with the rise in tension conveyed by a tremolando and crescendo sustained string

chord. Cassio begs forgiveness and says that he cannot speak, his vocal line drunkenly broken by rests and accompanied by a pathetic descending chordal phrase played by the clarinets and solo bassoon with pianissimo string punctuations on the same descending notes.

Otello now learns that Montano has been wounded and loses his temper once again, indicated by a forte-piano chord played tremolando by the strings. Accompanied by crescendo e tremolando string chords, Otello rages that his blood boils in fury. This statement is emphatically marked once more with the rising six-note staccato string motive at QQ.

There is a dramatic change of mood as Otello notices Desdemona. A sustained piano string chord accompanies his query whether the uproar has disturbed her sleep. But the rising "anger" motive returns Otello to the situation at hand. He tells Cassio that he is no longer his Captain, this declaration reinforced by two forte string chords and one last statement of the "anger" motive.

With the Poco più mosso at the ninth measure of QQ the music becomes more relaxed, settling down to a lengthy sequence for strings in which the cellos play a throbbing pedal on marcato F's in alternating octaves for twelve measures, while the violins establish a rocking "nocturnal" rhythm (Example 14). This subdued orchestral passage accompanies the clearing of the populace from the scene and Otello's instructions to Iago to restore peace.

At [RR] Otello and Desdemona are left alone and the music becomes more tranquil over a long pedal F in octaves in the double basses with pulsating support from the horns. At the same time, the rocking rhythm of Example 14 is taken up by the solo flute, clarinet, bassoon, violins and violas. This passage, marked diminuendo sempre, subsides ten measures later, leaving only a solo muted cello to continue the "rocking" rhythm, climbing to high E-flat (Example 15).

In the seventeenth measure of [RR], three more muted cellos join the texture in a simple yet lush quartet passage which serves as an introduction to the famous duet "Già nella notte densa." The range and variety of Verdi's orchestral inventiveness increases as the piece proceeds. It consists of a series of lyrical passages, each distinguished by its own characteristic orchestral texture and instrumental color.

The first fifteen measures of the duet are sung by Otello and accompanied by the entire cello section divisi a 4. At [SS], this texture gives way to an accompaniment of muted violins and violas in four parts as Desdemona reflects on the trials and dreams that marked their courtship. She asks Otello if he remembers their early days of romance. The simplicity of the dramatic moment is conveyed by the delicacy of the scoring. Two flutes and piccolo sustain a C major chord while the harp plays a rising arpeggio allargando e morendo over a span of four octaves. Two bassoons double the sustained low C and G of the muted cellos while muted

violins and violas also sustain a C major chord. A rich, ethereal texture is produced when only the harp arpeggio is heard between the low G of the bassoons and cellos and the G two octaves higher in the viola part (Example 16). Eight measures before [TT], pianissimo flutes, English horn, clarinets, bass clarinet, horn, and harp replace the strings in Desdemona's accompaniment as she relates how enthralled she was by the stories of Otello's life ("Quando narravi l'esu le vita"). Cellos and double basses supply a discreet pizzicato pulse beneath.

The relative calm of this passage is followed at [TT] by Otello's agitated memories of battle; pianississimo martial rhythms are played by the cornet, trumpet, piccolo, oboe, flute, and timpani. The harp plays rapid arpeggiated thirty-second-note figures come un mormorio over agitated rising arpeggi in the first violin part and restless repeated notes in the second violin and viola parts. The bassoons make a frenzied contribution to this section of the scene with staccato off-beat sixteenth-note octave leaps, the first note preceded by a grace-note. The cellos provide pizzicato pulses on the beat while the double basses play a long sustained counter-melody. This busy texture builds in six measures to a climax reflecting Otello's passion (Example 17).

In the seventh measure after [TT], a sudden tranquility is introduced by a measure of repeated sixteenth notes in octaves played by the violins staccato, leggerissimo e diminuendo. This shift effectively sets the mood for Desdemona's "Poi mi guidavi

ai fulgidi deserti," in which the dolcissimo vocal line is doubled by the English horn and solo flute in unison, accompanied by the repeated-note figure played by the violins and violas, sustained high harmonics by the cellos, and piano arpeggiated chords on the first beat of each measure by the harp (Example 18).

Another abrupt change of orchestral color occurs at [UU] with Otello's sweet and passionate reply "Ingentilia di lacrime la storia il tuo bel viso." Sustained pianississimo strings and gently-moving pianissimo woodwind parts accompany Otello's statement that he was touched to see her so affected by his stories.

The Poco più largo two measures after [VV] presents one of the most exquisite moments in the opera. Otello sings "E tu m'amavi per le miei aventure" accompanied by a leggero pianississimo high-register tremolo for violins, violas, and cellos--the first violin tremolo doubling Otello's noble vocal line (Example 19). Desdemona repeats this phrase and text four measures later with the personal pronoun suitably adjusted and with an expanded orchestration that includes solo flute doubling the voice and second flute, English horn, and bass clarinet playing counter-melodies. The orchestral texture then changes to a rich arco low string sonority as Otello and Desdemona alternate vocal phrases for four measures.

At [WW] the orchestral tension builds while Otello invites death to challenge his happiness ("Venga la morte"). The voice

is accompanied by a sustained chord played by the horns, oboes, clarinets, and English horn, tremolo in flutes, and a rising arpeggio in bass clarinet. After four measures tremolando strings are added to the texture, and the flutes cease their tremolo. As Otello's passion calms, the tremolando agitation in the strings dies away and pianississimo sustained chords in woodwinds and strings project a more subdued musical background. Four measures before [XX] an orchestral representation of passion-filled heart-beats is produced by B-natural pulses in octaves for the harp with excited off-beat syncopated triads played by the horns (Example 20).

The syncopation continues at [XX] now assumed by violins, violas, flutes, and English horn in a rising triadic "celestial" passage with the harp providing broken chords as Desdemona prays for heaven's protection.

Otello's reply "A questa tua preghiera 'Amen' risponda" is accompanied in a lush homophonic setting for woodwinds and horns. Desdemona repeats the two-measure "'Amen' risponda" phrase supported by full strings pianissimo.

Six measures before [YY], the first violins and solo oboe commence a rising semitone sixteenth-note figure for five measures indicative of the "weeping" motives of other Verdi operas as Otello states that his joy is so great that he weeps (Example 21). One measure before [YY], the violins play an ascending broken A-sharp diminished-seventh chord which leads to the famous "bacio" motive at [YY]. The motive is basically an orchestral one with its

melody played by tremolando first violins, solo clarinet, and oboe, with sustained chords played by the remaining strings, flutes, English horn, bass clarinet, bassoons and horns (Example 22). Otello's sporadic interjections of "un bacio" impart a dramatic pathos seldom equalled in the operatic literature. The final vocal phrase of the motive--"ancora un bacio"--is made even more poignant doubled by the solo clarinet.

At the Poco più lento nine measures after [YY] the harp plays three measured rising arpeggi pianississimo while violins and violas sustain high pianississimo E's and G's for nine measures. Flute and English horn play long unison notes that rise in semi-tones to change the harmonic structure of the passage. This transparent, subdued orchestral texture effectively creates the atmosphere of the clearing night sky and the now-peaceful evening as Otello and Desdemona walk slowly to the fortress.

They sing their final vow of love with a "shimmering" orchestral background of high-register violins and flutes tremolando, ethereal trills played by the violas and piccolo, sustained tones played by the English horn, bassoons, clarinet, bass clarinet, and horns, and constant thirty-second-note arpeggi for the harp (Example 23).

As Otello and Desdemona disappear into the fortress, the first violins sustain a high trill while the cellos divisi a 4 play the calm, contented theme of Otello's opening phrase of the duet--"Già nella notte densa." Three measures from the end of

the act the violin trill is reduced to two solo instruments and the harp strikes a series of descending tonic-dominant tones to a low D-flat as the curtain falls.

Act Two

In the brief orchestral prelude to the second act of Otello, Verdi introduced a simple motive which is utilized for a variety of dramatic purposes throughout the opening scene. The figure, always in the minor mode, consists of a rising sixteenth-note triplet and a single descending quarter note. It is first heard played fiercely in unison by four bassoons and cellos, followed in the next measure by clarinets and violas. The listener is, at once, given the impression of evil and plotting (Example 24). Then the music relaxes to a deceiving elegance in preparation for the raising of the curtain and Iago's scene, beginning in the seventh measure after [A]. Here is Shakespeare's villain at his smoothest--advising Cassio to seek Desdemona's help in retaining his honor. A broad, lyrical theme borne out of the opening motive dominates this recitative-like scene, usually in string sonorities. The dramatic action moves quickly. Cassio retires to the terrace to await Desdemona and Iago sardonically declares that Cassio's ruin is imminent.

Eleven measures before [D], the entire orchestra plays a tremendous fortissimo melody, spanning five octaves, which introduces Iago's famous Credo ("Credo in un Dio crudel") (Example 25). One of the most powerful musical dramatizations of evil ever

composed, the Credo displays inspired orchestral technique.

Iago sings his declamatory statement of belief over fortissimo trills in thirds in the low register of the clarinets and violas joined by unison trills in oboes three measures later and trills for bassoons with timpani tremoli three measures before [D]. The passage is punctuated by a forceful staccato e fortissimo sixteenth-note ascending scale played by the piccolo and violins and two heavily-accented closing chords at [D] for full orchestra.

In the second measure of [D], the mood changes as two string passages denoted aspramente ("bitterly") are heard. The first passage consists of a unison theme made up of a sixteenth-note mordent and a series of descending eighth-note triplet figures, followed by a one-beat, rising scale for violas, cellos, and double basses and a series of falling piano tonic and dominant pizzicato tones introducing Iago's phrase "Dalla viltà d'un germe" ("from the vileness of a worm") (Example 26). This text is punctuated by two abridged statements of this motive. Verdi marked these measures pppp and the theme seems to indicate the crawling of a worm.

In the seventh measure of [D], the composer wrote a second phrase with the aspramente indication consisting of the opening triplet motive of the act followed by three trills scored for solo oboe, violins, and violas. This passage, played over a cluster of notes played in the low register of the bassoons, double-stopped cellos, and divisi double basses, portrays the relentless and

determined evil of Iago.

Five measures before [E], the strings play a one-beat downward thirty-second-note scale which leads immediately to a return of the powerful tutta forza opening of the Credo, this time with Iago acknowledging his belief at the top of his voice, "Sì, quest'è la mia fè!"

At [E], cornets and trombones begin a repeated triplet fanfare figure on a C minor chord while the upper strings, piccolo, flutes, oboes, and clarinets play the falling mordent-triplet figure of Example 26 diminuendo and with arco staccato notes as opposed to pizzicato.

Beginning with the words "Credo con fermo cuore" in the third measure of [E], the strings are eliminated from the accompaniment, the first phrase of the passage being supported solely by the martial cornets and trumpets. With the words "siccome credi la vedovella al tempio" ("as believes the widow at the church"), Iago sings a deceptively gentle melody, still accompanied chordally by cornets and trumpets and doubled by the solo oboe, clarinet, and bassoon. This change in musical character is again a warning by the composer of the varied faces of Iago's treachery--one moment defiant, bold, and contemptuous and the next moment charming and suave. The evil constantly turns in his mind, indicated orchestrally by the sporadic mordent figures in the strings as he vows that his destiny in life is to perform demonic deeds.

At [F] Iago grows more excited and frantic, depicted by constant alterations of the orchestral dynamics.

Second violins alone tremolando e pianissimo support his vocal line as he reflects on the futility of man's life. First violins and violas are added at the second measure of [F] with the bassoons and cellos playing the downward octave leap with preceding grace-note (associated with Iago in the first act) in the fifth measure of [F] as the orchestration becomes dynamically more agitated.

The seventh measure of [F] is a powerful fortissimo tutti with accented repeated triplets played by the cornets, trombones, trumpets, horns, bassoons, cellos, and double basses with the high strings and woodwinds playing the sixteenth-note mordent and falling eighth-note figure that permeates the entire scene.

At the stringendo a poco a poco eight measures before [G], Iago begins the final statement of his creed, declaring that man is a toy of wicked fate from "the germ of the cradle" ("dal germe della culla"). An agitated orchestral intensity is created by tremolando violins and violas with the cellos, bassoons and solo horn echoing Iago's vocal line one measure later. This passage culminates four measures before [G] with a fortissimo tutti chord with string tremoli and rolls for the timpani and bass drum.

Two measures before [G], low-register strings, oboes, clarinets, and bassoons play a rush of staccato sixteenth notes subsiding two measures later to a piano, sustained drone played by the violas and cellos. As Iago speaks the words "al verme dell' avel" ("to the worm of the grave"), the ominous presence of Death is portrayed by a pianississimo tremolando C-sharp in low cellos,

a low sustained trill in violins and violas, drones in horns, bassoons, alternating quarter notes and tremolo beats in clarinets, and a sustained pppp roll of the timpani (Example 27).

Then, in the fifth measure after [G], with only a sustained unison G in clarinets and violas still sounding, the atmosphere relaxes and a subdued, harmonized legato version of the Credo's opening orchestral statement is played by the woodwinds, horns, and strings, ending on a pianissimo sustained chord in the low register as Iago acknowledges the inevitable coming of death. His word "morte" coincides with another pianississimo chord and a single stroke from the timpani and bass drum. After a death-like pausa fermata, another two measures of the soft legato version of the Credo theme is played by the strings alone, coming once more to a silent pause as Iago asks "e poi?" ("and then?"). The homophonic string passage continues for two more measures and then Iago repeats his query. The first three notes of the Credo theme are now heard in three low pizzicato notes for cellos followed by a unison arco half note rising a semitone to a quarter note in cellos and double basses marked pppp.

There is another ominous silence and Iago mockingly proclaims that death is nothing ("La Morte è il Nulla"). A four-measure, brass-dominated fortissimo orchestral coda begins eight measures before [H] with trills in upper strings, ringing cymbals, and falling triplets and trills in upper woodwinds, supporting his final triumphant outburst that "heaven is an old fable" ("è vecchia fola il Ciel").

The staccato triplet motive now descends through the winds and strings diminuendo for two measures, followed by two measures of staccato eighth-note duples descending from the violins, to the violas, through the cellos to the double basses. These four measures form a connecting bridge to the next scene of the opera which begins at [H].

The strings now play a quick leggero e staccato passage similar in nature to the "conspirator" music of Verdi's earlier works. This constant light, detached movement effectively portrays the scheming of Iago as he puts his plan for Otello's ruin into action. Otello enters and Iago indicates Desdemona and Cassio talking in the garden. Otello's anger and jealousy surface as Iago questions Desdemona's relationship with Cassio.

Iago's treachery is perhaps best portrayed by the orchestra in the ninth measure of [N] when he warns Otello to beware of jealousy with the words "Temete, signor, la gelosia!" set by Verdi to a mysterious homophonic sequence of chromatic movement for the entire orchestra. The rising-falling motion of the sinister, pianissimo accompaniment and the sotto voce treatment of Iago's vocal line convey an atmosphere of evil and poisonous deceit.

At Lo stesso movimento twelve measures before [O], Iago tells Otello that jealousy is a "dark hydra, malignant, blind, that poisons itself with its own venom," his ominous, "snake like" vocal line doubled by unison violas and solo clarinet with bassoon and cellos an octave below. The passage concludes with a demonic

trill in the voice part, violins, violas, flutes, oboes, clarinets, solo bassoon, and two horns one measure before [O] (Example 28).

Otello states that there must be investigation and proof before he will doubt his wife, his emotional turmoil depicted by a turbulent, agitated orchestration.

At [P] the dramatic tension suddenly relaxes as the chorus is heard singing offstage in the garden, accompanied solely by a tonic-dominant ostinato for cornamusa[8]. In this pastoral context, Iago, in a rapid recitative monotone, advises Otello not to suspect Desdemona but, rather, to watch her carefully (Example 29).

During a brief interlude in which the strings play a series of piano rising and falling sixteenth-note figures con eleganza, Desdemona enters, surrounded by women, children, and sailors. Flutes, solo clarinet, bassoon, and horn enter four measures before [Q] adding a gentle, "rocking" feeling to the orchestral accompaniment. This scene musically and dramatically provides the necessary relief from the tremendous tension that has been building since the beginning of the act.

At [Q] the chorus of women and sailors sing the song heard previously, accompanying themselves on the "guzla (una specie di

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[8] Bagpipes. Verdi indicated in his score that this part may be played by two oboes and this is the case in most modern performances.

mandola)"[9] and "piccole arpe ad armacollo."[10] Now, in addition to the offstage cornamusa (or two oboes) ostinato, the song is accompanied by rising and falling sixteenth-note arpeggi for mandolin[11] and eighth-note strums of guitar[12] as well as an arpeggiated ostinato figure in first violins and a subdued dominant-tonic alternation in woodwinds, horns, and lower strings. Second violins and violas provide off-beat pizzicato pulses for four-and-one-half measures and then soft arco tremolando on-beat chords for three-and-one-half measures.

At [R] there is a change of meter to 6/8 and Verdi left the accompaniment entirely to the stage instruments as the children's chorus sings a unison tune against a "rocking" vocal rhythm set by the adult chorus.

At the Un poco più animato in the eighteenth measure after [R], the baritones of the chorus sing a melody as they offer Desdemona necklaces of coral and pearl, accompanied by leggerissime

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[9]This indicates a mistake on Verdi's part as the guzla is "a kind of rebab, a bowed instrument with one string only." The mandola is in the lute class with a rounded back and a short neck. See Marcuse, Musical Instruments, p. 328.

[10]Small harps resting on the shoulders.

[11]Two harps may be substituted.

[12]Two harps an octave lower may be substituted.

staccato sixteenth-note arpeggi and doubled by cornamusa and guitar, the rest of the chorus singing sustained pianississimo chords beneath.

In the second measure after [S], the women begin a melancholy unison tune in G-sharp minor accompanied by a "rocking" rhythm provided by the onstage instruments, children's chorus, and men's chorus.

The opening choral sequence is repeated beginning at [T], with the pit orchestra participating as before. In the ninth measure after [T], Desdemona begins a dolce coda echoing a vocal phrase sung by the chorus four measures earlier. An ethereal atmosphere is created by pianississimo high tremolando chords in the violins and violas, and low pedal E's played by the cellos and double basses. Flutes, oboes, and clarinets double Desdemona's lyrical vocal line in thirds, while the bassoon and solo horn play counter-melodies.

Otello, moved by the scene, sings a few brief interjections while Iago, in a sotto voce aside, vows to ruin this love and beauty. The high tremolando string chords and low pedals have been sustained throughout the coda and now die away. An instrumental postlude begins at [U] with first violins playing a long pianissimo legato sequence of constant sixteenth notes, harmonized by an almost constant quarter-note movement in the remaining strings, flutes, clarinets, bassoons, and horns. In the sixth measure of the postlude, the first violins (still in sixteenth notes) play an E major scale while the accompanying instruments come to rest on a long

held E major chord.

The chorus disperses and Desdemona comes towards Otello, violins alone playing repeated high leggero E's in octaves. The floating, celestial quality of the throbbing, high-register strings effectively and simply portrays the beauty and innocence of Otello's wife. Piano flutes and clarinets accompany her tranquil opening vocal phrase in thirds, while the solo oboe adds a plaintive quality as it doubles Desdemona's melody in the tenth measure after [U]. Desdemona passionately asks that Cassio be pardoned and the texture gradually thickens with the addition of sustained high-register strings, woodwinds, and horns, the violins doubling Desdemona's part in octaves. In the first measure after [V], Otello refuses to forgive Cassio, the abruptness of his refusal being conveyed by the words "Non ora" sung unaccompanied. Once more Desdemona asks her husband to restore Cassio's honor, her voice supported by sustained chords played by the strings with a con espressione solo oboe part in the third measure after [V]. Otello repeats his unaccompanied refusal "Non ora," this time marked con asprezza ("with harshness") and followed, in the seventh measure after [V], by a fortissimo outburst played by the oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns, and strings, including an initial triple-stopped chord for first violins. In the next measure, Desdemona asks why he reacts so viciously, her fear depicted dramatically by four measures of tremolando second violins and violas, a falling sixteenth-note chromatic figure in the first violins and

terrifying fortissimo pizzicato "thuds" on the first beat of each measure. Her agitation increases two measures before [X], a more restless orchestration portraying that feeling with a series of descending sixteenth-note scale runs played by the violins and loud syncopated chords in oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns, and violas.

Desdemona tries to wipe Otello's brow with her handkerchief at [X], an underlying turbulence provided by pianissimo syncopated chords played by the violins and violas with urgent repeated eighth notes played by the cellos.

In the sixth measure after [X], forte eighth-note string chords punctuate as Otello throws the handkerchief to the ground in rage. Following a tension-filled pausa, Desdemona says that she is sorry if she has unknowingly offended Otello. This subdued, pathetic apology is supported by four measures of pianissimo off-beat chords played by the violins, violas, and cellos and three measures of first violins doubling the voice (violas a third below) with sustained chords played by the second violins and cellos.

This phrase leads directly into a quartet which begins in the nineteenth measure after [X] with Desdemona's words "Dammi la dolce e lieta parola del perdone." This piece represents a dramatic-musical form that Verdi had utilized since the outset of his career--a quartet in which four totally-different points of view are expressed. Desdemona laments her treatment by Otello in a lyrical line, while Otello, ignoring his wife, soliloquizes

bitterly about his suspicions. Iago and Emilia carry on an argument over Desdemona's handkerchief, Iago eventually snatching it away from his wife and remarking that his plan is already working. It is not a show-stopping piece like the Rigoletto quartet, but the clear differentiation between characters and the simultaneous presentation of three dramatic situations make it one of Verdi's supreme ensemble achievements.

The orchestra plays an important part in conveying the dramatic characterizations within the quartet, and perhaps nowhere is this more clearly indicated than in the first few measures of the piece. Desdemona's pleading line is supported by pianissimo legato chords in the strings with first violins doubling her vocal line. In the third measure of the quartet, Otello comments bitterly on the situation with abrupt staccato sixteenth-note chords repeating pianissimo in violins and violas, and pianississimo in the cellos and double basses. The detached pulses sound as the nagging and confused thoughts in Otello's mind (Example 30). Throughout the number, this alternation of short, agitated figures to characterize Otello's annoyance and long, flowing lines portraying Desdemona's passionate pleas is maintained.

At [Y] there is a momentary relief from the constantly building tension as Desdemona is left singing alone a long, descending line con calore ("with affection") accompanied by pianississimo dolcissimo triads played by the solo flute, oboes, clarinets, and tremolando violins and violas.

As the other characters return to the ensemble in the fourth measure of [Y], the orchestration once more becomes more agitated with frantic, rapidly-repeated B-flats played by the second violins and cellos, upward octave leaps in the double basses and bassoons (with preceding acciaccature), accented double-stopped eighth-note chords for first violins and violas, marcato chords played by the horns on each beat, and a constant crescendo roll in timpani.

All the voices sing together for the first time in the next measure. This remarkably effective passage of orchestration includes a note by Verdi concerning the trumpet and trombone parts--"Se non si può ottenere un pianissimo, si ommettano Trombe e Trombone. Nei piccoli teatri sarà meglio ommetterili addirittura.[13]" It is obvious from this indication that Verdi was trying to achieve a brief emotional "lull" as the characters contemplate their situations. The agitated orchestration resumes for one measure as passion rises, and then another desperate, emotional ebb is orchestrated in the eighth measure after [Y], followed by a section of unaccompanied singing where all four characters state their predicament one last time. A single pizzicato chord is played by tutti strings and the orchestra begins a pianissimo postlude at [Z] which includes a rising dolcissimo vocal line for Desdemona. Tremolando second violins and violas add a touch of

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[13]"If it is not possible to obtain a pianissimo, one should omit the trumpets and trombones. In small theaters it will be better to omit them anyway."

pathos as the distraught Otello orders Desdemona and Emilia away and the quartet dissipates naturally.

The succeeding scene between Iago and Otello is characterized orchestrally by syncopation, chordal punctuation, and intense string tremoli as the Moor, tormented by his suspicions, demands proof from Iago.

In the last two measures before [CC], a "horn-call" upward leap of a perfect fifth sounds twice in bassoons, trombones, cellos and double basses, accompanied by sempre più forte tremolando string chords, a long timpani roll, and sustained wind chords. This intense orchestration, heralding another emotional outburst, supports Otello's questioning exclamation "ed ora!...ed ora..." which leads to the powerful declamatory sequence "Ora per sempre addio" at [CC].

This piece, based on the famous "Farewell the tranquil mind" speech from Shakespeare's play, represents Otello's acceptance of his predicament. The strong martial influence of the number, conveyed by the "four-to-a-measure" strumming of two harps and pizzicato double basses divisi a quattro, creates the pathetic picture of a proud warrior felled by his wife's indiscretions (Example 31). Throughout the number, fanfare-like flourishes reinforce the idea of military strength--an ironic contrast to the emotionally-devastated condition of the man supported by this orchestration.

Otello desperately exclaims that he is ruined ("Della gloria

d'Otello è questo il fin"), his bitterness and despair emphasized by two measures of brass-dominated marcato chords. This leads to [EE], where violas and cellos begin a constant, restless triplet figure pianississimo molto staccato e tremolando which represents Otello's agitation and frustration as he again demands proof from Iago. The figure continues for fifteen measures, gradually being augmented by other instruments and crescendo poco a poco. It culminates three measures before [FF] with a fortissimo crash for orchestral tutti and a long descending sequence of triplets as Otello hurls Iago to the ground. At [FF] this orchestral outburst rests momentarily on a sustained C in three octaves for woodwinds, strings, horns, and bass trombone as Iago cries for divine grace to defend him from Otello's wrath. Iago declares that honesty is dangerous and strings play a measure of rising sixteenth notes ending with an abrupt tutti chord at [GG]. Then, unaccompanied, Otello stops Iago from leaving with the words "No...rimani." As Otello admits "forse onesto tu sei" ("Perhaps you are honest"), two ominous sustained chords are played by oboes, clarinets, and two solo bassoons. The haunting quality of the instrumentation sounds as a death knell, indicating that Otello's acceptance of Iago's story will culminate in his eventual demise (Example 32).

A piano e leggero accompaniment of on-beat eighth-note pulses in cellos and double basses alternating with off-beat eighth notes in violins begins in the seventh measure of [GG] as Otello says

that he believes that Desdemona is trustworthy. Then, as the doubts re-appear in his mind, the alternating pulses stop and oboes, clarinets, bassoons and two horns play a triadic flourish. The alternating string accompaniment resumes as he admits "e credo che non lo sia" ("and I believe she is not"). Following his words "te credo onesto" the string pulse again stops and his suspicions are once more indicated by the upward triads in two horns, bassoons, oboes, and clarinets. Nine measures before [HH], the restless alternation starts again as Otello, completely distraught, says he also believes her insincere ("e credo disleale"). This utilization of the orchestra to portray suspicion interrupting Otello's positive thoughts about his wife shows Verdi's unique ability to translate the dramatic conflict of the scene into aural terms.

Iago's famous "Era la notte" beginning in the second measure after [II] demonstrates orchestral technique that is brilliant in both its dramatic revelation and in its simplicity. Its first section is homophonic in style with muted first violins doubling Iago's insidious mezza voce vocal line as he tells of Cassio's "supposed" dream. Muted pianissimo second violins and violas and muted pianississimo cellos accompany chordally for the first twelve measures of the piece with unmuted double basses joining the texture in the ninth measure (Example 33). As Iago imitates Cassio's voice in a monotone vocal line, the orchestration changes completely, with Cassio's words accompanied by a closely-spaced

series of pianississimo four-part chords for three flutes in their lowest register and solo oboe (Example 34). The resulting effect is a strange, almost supernatural one, highly suitable for the narration of a dream. Two solo first violins con sordini, two solo second violins con sordini e tremolando, and a single muted cello tremolando then join the flutes and oboe in a downward chromatic run three measures before [JJ] which, when combined with Iago's descending chromatic line, give the passage an incredible sense of evil and seduction.

Iago continues his description pppp at the Più animato at [JJ] now accompanied by constant eighth-note movement in muted violins and violas, the second clarinet, solo flute, first bassoon, with pizzicato first beats in muted cellos, unmuted basses and a series of pedal tones (with preceding grace notes) for solo third horn.

In the eighth measure of [JJ] Iago once more affects Cassio's voice cupo ("gloomy") supported with dark pianissimo chords in clarinets, single bassoon and solo horn.

A four-measure dolcissimo string phrase follows with the first violins climbing to an ethereal E^4 played in harmonics. At [KK] Iago reassures Otello that he was only narrating a dream, knowing full well that he has sown the seeds of suspicion.

In a short recitative section Iago tells Otello that he has seen Desdemona's handkerchief in Cassio's hand. The orchestra depicts Otello's anguish in a series of syncopated chordal interjections.

In the thirteenth measure of [LL] agitated triplet motion begins in the violins, violas and cellos pianissimo, while piccolo, oboe, clarinets, bassoons and double basses contribute a series of punctuating large intervallic leaps with a grace note preceding the first note. The similarity between these figures and the punctuating devices connected with Iago in the first act is no mistake. In this instance, it is Iago's verbal poison that has caused the agitation and anger represented by the triplets. The dynamics increase gradually as Otello's passion rises and a serpentining line for solo oboe and two clarinets (doubling Otello's vocal line) replaces the intervallic leaps three measures before [MM].

At [MM] Otello's anger reaches a climax, dramatically portrayed by Verdi's orchestration. The triplet "agitation" figure is played fortissimo by flutes, piccolo, oboes, clarinets and full strings while bassoons, horns, cornets, trumpets, trombones and timpani play earth-shattering fortissimo syncopated chords. Otello screams three times for blood-- (Ah! sangue! sangue! sangue!"), each cry punctuated by a tremendous tutti chord.

The great "vengeance" duet "Si, pel ciel" begins in the fourth measure after [MM] with a change of meter to 3/4 and one last tutta forza chord. Then, a seething diminuendo sustained tremolando chord is played by violins and violas and Otello begins his vow of vengeance, his monotonic vocal line accompanied by the darkest of orchestrations--a cupo melody for solo clarinet, bass

clarinet, bassoons, and horns with pianississimo off-beat timpani and an ominous stroke of bass drum on the third beat of each measure and an effective arco eighth note on the second beat of each measure in cellos (preceded by four rising thirty-second notes) and a pizzicato eighth note on the third beat of each measure in cellos and double basses (Example 35).

In the fourteenth measure after [MM], the first bassoons and violins double Otello's vocal line while the violas and second bassoons play a parallel line a sixth below. Cellos and double basses play a constant sixteenth-note sextuplet figure based on the "snake-like" vocal melody and solo horn sustains a long pedal G-sharp. One measure later this vocal melody and its harmony are echoed by flutes, piccolo, oboes and clarinets.

At [NN] Otello tries to raise himself from his knees, but Iago forcibly stops him with the words "Non v'alzate ancor!" His command is reinforced by two bright fortissimo chords for piccolo, flutes, cornets, trumpets, trombones, and pizzicato violins, violas, and cellos. After a silence of one measure, Iago joins in the vendetta oath, singing the words "Testimon è il Sol ch'io miro" to the woodwind melody from the opening of the duet. The vocal line is doubled by the ominous sonority of bass clarinet, solo bassoon, solo horn, accompanied by the constant pianissimo sextuplet figure in violins and violas and punctuated by off-beat timpani strokes and pizzicato third beats in cellos and double basses.

The orchestration builds in intensity and excitement (a poco a poco stringendo e crescendo) six measures before [00]. A rising chromatic run in octaves played by the solo flute, oboe, clarinet, violins, and violas and a similar scale for three trombones in the next measure contribute to this electric effect.

Two measures after [00] Otello and Iago sing together (Otello in his opening monotone and Iago to the same tune as in the "Testimon è il Sol ch'io miro"). The full orchestral force is utilized in this concluding section. The score is characterized by fierce off-beat chords in violins, double basses, brass, and high winds, doubling of Iago's vocal melody by the bassoons and bass clarinet, syncopated chords in horns, and off-beat strokes in timpani and bass drum (Example 36).

In the first three measures of [PP] the frenzied state of both men is indicated by demonic fortissimo trills in piccolo, flutes, oboes, and clarinets, fanfare figures for horns, trumpets, and cornets, syncopated horns on the second and third beats of the measure, and descending staccato sextuplet scales played by the strings.

The climax of the duet begins in the fifth measure of [PP] with a tutta forza passage where every instrument of the orchestra moves homorhythmically in a pesante homophonic phrase of extraordinary power (Example 37). Otello and Iago cry out their final invocation of vengeance "Dio vendicator!" completely unaccompanied. On the final syllable of their oath, the homophonic tutti returns

with an arresting succession of pesante major chords as the act ends.

Act Three

The short prelude to the third act of Otello begins with an ominous staccato e pianissimo semitone alternation played by the violas which immediately creates an atmosphere of mystery and tension. The prelude is based on a haunting melody in the minor mode, first heard in connection with "jealousy" in the second act of the opera.[14] Here imbedded in a subdued contrapuntal string texture, the theme portrays Otello's jealous suspicions.

The curtain rises on Iago and Otello in the armory, their conversation-in-progress being interrupted by a herald announcing that the Venetian envoys to Cyprus have been sighted in the harbour. Otello dismisses the herald and the violins, violas, and cellos conclude the section with the final two measures of the "jealousy" theme.

Iago continues to discuss his plan for Otello to overhear Cassio in a revealing and incriminating conversation.

A graceful, piano two-measure string passage in which triadic eighth-note motion is prevalent accompanies Desdemona's entrance at [C]. Supported by ben legato sustained string chords,

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[14]This is the only theme in the opera, besides the "bacio" motive, that appears outside of the act in which it originally occurs. See Hughes, Famous Verdi Operas, p. 457.

Desdemona begins the "dolce e cantabile" duet "Dio ti giocondi." Otello's greeting to his wife "Grazie, madonna" is sung to the same melody and is doubled by the melancholy quality of the solo clarinet. The addition of this "con espressione" clarinet line indicates the underlying sadness and misery that Otello feels as he feigns a calm exterior. As the duet proceeds, the orchestration expands with the inclusion of flutes, oboes, second clarinet, bassoons, and horns, but the tranquil mood established by the strings in the beginning still pervades the scene. The two-measure string passage which opened the duet serves as a brief pianississimo postlude at [E] with flutes doubling the final cambiata and cadence.

The mood changes as Desdemona tells Otello that she wants to talk again of Cassio, her words "Ma riparlar vi debbo di Cassio" left unaccompanied. The name "Cassio" triggers Otello's anger five measures after [E], indicated in the orchestration by a "seething" rising and falling sixteenth-note figure played by the first violins, a descending ostinato figure played by cellos and violas, and a four-measure sustained pedal A played by the solo oboe (Example 38). As Otello's hysteria mounts, dark instrumental colors are gradually added to the orchestral texture--solo bassoon and double basses ten measures before [F] and horns in the next measure. He demands that Desdemona produce the handkerchief that he had given her, which obviously she is unable to do. He threatens her in a "cupo" unaccompanied vocal phrase followed immediately by a foreboding sustained chord for the solo oboe,

clarinets, bassoons, and strings, creating a powerful dramatic effect. As Otello tells Desdemona that the handkerchief is enchanted, the violas and cellos begin the rising and falling "anger" motive. Again he asks her to produce the handkerchief and the first violins assume the motive. The utilization of a brighter, more vibrant instrumental color effectively depicts Otello's rising ardor. In the fifth measure after [G] Otello asks for the handkerchief for a third time, his demand punctuated by a violent tutti chord and a descending sixteenth-note chromatic scale played by violins and violas. The orchestration suddenly thins, indicating a relaxation of tension. The first violins play a brief descending figure which comes to rest on a low sustained E-flat.

Nine measures after [G] the meter changes to 6/8 and with the words "Tu di me ti fai gioco" Desdemona dismisses Otello's insistence as a ploy to divert her attention from Cassio. She resumes her plea for Cassio, her "con eleganza" vocal line again supported by strings indicating a return to her earlier intention.

Six measures later, the cellos begin the nervous semitone alternation that opened the act, portraying Otello's suspicions. Desdemona continues to ask for Cassio's pardon, her vocal part now doubled by the solo clarinet. A sense of growing tension is created through pianissimo tremolando violins and ominous pizzicato beats played by the double basses on the first beat of each measure.

Four measures before [H] the cellos play a rising chromatic scale of thirty-second notes which reinforces Otello's cry of

"Il fazzoletto" marked "terribile." Oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns, timpani, and full strings tremolando sustain a fortissimo chord as Desdemona finally realizes that Otello is serious. Low-register violins and violas alternate a menacing staccato sixteenth-note ostinato figure beginning at the più mosso at [H]. This figure, puncuated by pianissisimo chords played by three trombones, creates an electric atmosphere as Otello forces Desdemona to swear that she is faithful. The dramatic tension of the scene increases nine measures after [H] as the cellos and two solo bassoons join the texture playing the descending ostinato figure. Four measures later, the horns and violas double the somber trombone chords while the bassoons and cellos play a descending then ascending chromatic scale in sixteenth notes as Otello accuses his wife of being impure.

Sixteen measures after [H], the orchestral texture dissipates. Only pianissisimo e tremolando violins and violas play as Otello, his vocal line broken by two ascending chromatic scales played by cellos, orders Desdemona to swear that she is chaste. This she does, supported by an anxious tremolando chord played by violins, violas, and cellos.

The solo flute, piccolo, oboe, clarinet, and violins suddenly play a rising sixteenth-note scale heard in three octaves, culminating in a fortissimo tutta forza chord seven measures before [I]. This outburst is followed by a series of twelve heavily-accented chords played by woodwinds, brass, timpani, violas, cellos,

and double basses, while violins play a descending sequence of sixteenth notes derived from the ostinato figure first heard at [H]. This explosive orchestral passage punctuates Otello's enraged exclamation "Giura e ti danna" ("Swear and damn yourself").

Abruptly the orchestration subsides into a subdued but highly intense passage of nine measures which portrays Otello's spent condition. As Desdemona asks Otello to explain his anger, two oboes in unison sustain a pedal E and pianississimo bassoons, horns, trombones, timpani, pizzicato cellos and double basses play a dark, percussive repeated figure that represents Desdemona's frightened heart-beats (Example 39). She begins a lyrical "dolce con passione" vocal passage ten measures after [I], accompanied by soft "throbbing" quarter notes played by violins, violas, and cellos. Pianississimo flutes and solo bassoon contribute a quality of innocent sorrow as they are added to the orchestral texture three measures later.

At the come prima, fifteen measures before [J], Desdemona sings a "cantabile" phrase "io prego il cielo per te con questo pianto" supported by the constantly-repeating quarter-note chords played by the piccolo, flutes, oboes, clarinets, two horns, violins, and violas. The first bassoons and cellos play a counter-melody in quarter notes and a low pianissimo pedal F is played by the double basses, second bassoons, and the other two horns.

At [J], violins in octaves play the theme begun by Desdemona fifteen measures earlier while the woodwinds, horns, violas, cellos, and double basses continue the pulsing quarter-note accompaniment.

With this lush orchestral texture as the background, Otello implores Desdemona to be honest with him and she calmly states that "Heaven witnesses her faithfulness." Immediately, Otello's rage explodes again as, unaccompanied, he exclaims "No, la vede l'inferno" ("No, hell sees it"). This enraged outburst is punctuated by two beats of rising sixteenth-note arpeggios played by the violins, violas, solo flute, and solo clarinet, and a brief fanfare figure on a D-sharp diminished chord played by cornets and trumpets.

Otello pushes Desdemona away from him as two measures of staccato descending sixteenth-note figures played by the strings depict his distress and frustration. He breaks down crying, his tears effectively portrayed in the orchestration by half-note D-flats with preceding acciaccature played by the cellos, double basses, horns, and second bassoons. Solo oboe, clarinet, first bassoons, violins, and violas play a mournful rising eighth-note figure (Example 40).

Eleven measures before [K], the violins, violas, oboe, clarinet, and first bassoons play a syncopated chromatically-descending line which portrays Otello's remorse and despair. The cellos play a pianissimo "weeping" semitone figure. Desdemona claims "con disperazione" that she is innocent in a noble fortissimo vocal line beginning five measures before [K]. Half of the first violins, solo oboe, and clarinet double the voice while the remaining strings, second oboe, second clarinet, bassoons, horns, and timpani tremoli support with sustained whole-note chords.

The chromatically-descending line resumes at [K], played by the solo oboe and first violins alone, with syncopated repeated chords played by second violins, violas, and clarinets. Cellos and first bassoons play a short ostinato figure consisting of three rising quarter notes followed by a downward leap of a diminished seventh. This figure gives the passage an impression of urgency.

Four measures after [K], the orchestration subsides to a unison B-natural drone played by the oboes, clarinets, violins, and violas as Desdemona demands to know her crime. Otello begins his accusation in fragmentary monotonic phrases supported by pianissimo tremoli played by violins and divisi violas (double-stopped violas six measures later). Three trombones play sustained pedal tones and cellos interject a pianissimo rising and falling sixteenth-note figure derived from the "anger" motive heard earlier in the scene.

Desdemona cries out in disbelief three measures before [L], and the orchestra reinforces her astonishment with a fortissimo tutta forza chord, followed by a series of staccato triplet chords for the entire orchestra. The fierce chordal punctuation ceases and the bassoons, cellos, and double basses are left alone to play a dark, somber series of descending tones. The mood shifts from angry agitation to relative calm, depicted by an orchestral return of the opening theme of the scene "Dio ti giocondi" played in unison by the solo oboe, clarinet, and first violins six measures after [L]. This tranquil, ironically content passage accompanies Otello

as he takes Desdemona by the hand and tells her that he wishes to make amends for his actions, his voice joining the texture and doubling the theme seven measures after [L]. As the passage continues, the orchestration is augmented with the addition of a melody-doubling flute and a nervous alternating figure played by second violins. Otello gently asks Desdemona to forgive him if his thoughts were wrong. Half-note chords played by second violins, violas, and cellos accompany this apology, creating a dramatic orchestral lull. Then, as he sarcastically states that he thought her to be "quella vil cortigiana..." ("that vile whore..."), cornets and trumpets play a punctuating flourish of rapidly repeated chords and trombones play a sixteenth-note ascending scale followed by a single marcato chord for full orchestra. He finishes the sentence--"che è la sposa d'Otello" ("that is the wife of Otello"). On this final word "Otello," tremolando violas and cellos combined with a low B-natural pedal played by solo horn and double basses and an ominous pppp timpani roll provide a somber foundation for his mocking accusation. A crescendo applied to this sparse orchestration leads with terrifying effect to a violent tutta forza at [M] as Otello loses all control of his emotions. This violent tutti is characterized by a repeating fortissimo rendition of the "anger" motive played by flutes, piccolo, first oboe, first clarinet, and violins, fanfare flourishes played by cornets and trumpets, accented fortissimo chords for the second oboe, second clarinet, bassoons, horns, trombones, and tremolando violins, a percussive

rising arpeggiated figure played by the cellos and double basses in octaves, and tremoli for timpani and bass drum (Example 41).

Otello thrusts Desdemona from the room. In the seventh measure after [M], a diminuendo aurally portrays the waning of Otello's anger. The entire woodwind and brass sections sustain a long diminuendo chord while the violins and violas play a descending sixteenth-note chromatic scale for two measures, doubled an octave lower by the cellos. This downward rush effectively portrays Otello's defeated emotional collapse.

Six measures before [N] Otello's spent rage is depicted by the initial rising fragment of the "anger" motive diminuendo sempre played successively by first violins, second violins, violas, and finally staccato e pianississimo by the cellos. A morendo timpani roll provides a suitable sense of gloom (Example 42).

At the Adagio at [N], pianississimo strings play a descending chromatic passage in three octaves that depicts Otello sinking into depression (Example 43). This simple yet evocative figure effectively introduces the major dramatic soliloquy of the act "Dio! mi potevi scagliar." The Moor laments his misery and shame in a near-monotone style, accompanied by a pathetic figure played by the first violins beginning in the second measure after [N]. Two low-register horns and double basses play a slow-moving counter-melody to further color this haunting orchestral accompaniment. The chromatic string figure punctuates between vocal phrases.

Otello's resentment begins to rise and with this increase in

passion the orchestration builds in intensity with the addition of more instruments. This enlarged orchestration is reinforced with the indication poco crescendo two measures after [O] and Otello's vocal line is marked "con voce" ("with voice") as opposed to the speech-like sobbing that has so-far characterized this soliloquy.

In a simple but extremely effective transformation of mood, the key changes from A-flat minor to E-flat major as Otello shuns self-pity and accepts his fate in a "cantabile" passage beginning with the words "Ma, o pianto, o duol!" Pianissimo high-register tremolando string chords, occasionally supported by woodwinds and horns, indicate a sense of inner peace and conviction.

Seven measures before [Q] violins, solo clarinet, first bassoons and solo horn play a proud legato theme, supported by tremolando violins and cellos as Otello expresses his bitterness in recitative-like phrases. At [Q], he curses Fate in fortissimo exclamatory vocal phrases, bassoons, cellos, and double basses reinforcing each outburst with a marcato rising figure while tremolando violins and violas sempre stringendo play sforzando sustained E-flats on the second half of each measure. This texture effectively creates an intensity which is maintained up to the moment when Iago rushes in to announce that Cassio is approaching. He urges Otello to conceal himself, agitated orchestration supporting the frantic stage action.

At [R], first violins play a gentle, seductive theme sulla 4ª Corda[15], accompanied by long pianissimo sustained chords played by the remaining strings (including double-stopped violas). Supported by this sensuous orchestral background, Iago greets Cassio as a friend and comrade, the words he sings and the charm of Verdi's orchestration disguising his evil intentions.

At the allegro moderato at [S], flutes, piccolo, oboes, clarinets, and solo bassoon play a light-hearted instrumental introduction characterized by piano trills, acciaccature, large intervallic leaps, and a dance-like dotted rhythm. Iago entreats Cassio to talk of his love affair with Bianca while solo flute and the first violins continue the dotted dance theme and the remaining strings, oboes, clarinets, and solo bassoon play a "leggero" detached chordal accompaniment.

Eleven measures after [S], the meter changes to 6/8 and a delicate texture of violins, violas, cellos, solo flute, piccolo, oboe, clarinet, and bassoons in the high register accompanies the conversation between Cassio and Iago. The relaxed "rocking" triadic movement of the instrumental lines, ornamented by grace notes and trills, helps to create the impression of two men casually gossiping. Iago manipulates the dialogue, allowing the hidden Otello to hear only what he wants him to hear. At [T] Otello

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[15] Verdi indicated that this melody should be played in high position on the fourth or G string rather than on brighter sounding higher strings.

comments bitterly on the conversation from his hiding place, accompanied by somber sustained chords played by the bassoons, horns, violas, cellos, and double basses. Second violins play a nervous sixteenth-note figure that represents Otello's inner turmoil (Example 44).

The "rocking" accompaniment and its orchestration of upper woodwinds and strings resumes in the ninth measure after [T] as the conversation between Cassio and Iago once again becomes the center of focus. Eight measures before [U] this tranquil mood is once more disturbed by Otello's stifled ravings, supported as before. The dramatic contrast between the light-hearted conversation of Iago and Cassio and the tortured commentary of Otello is painted vividly through the utilization of two opposing orchestral textures alternating within the same piece.

Iago now begins to sing sotto voce and he moves Cassio out of earshot. The orchestration is reduced correspondingly to four first violins, four second violins, two violas, two cellos, one double bass, flutes, piccolo, and solo bassoon. Eleven measures after [U], and again four measures before [V], Cassio's narration trails away into inaudibility, ingeniously depicted in both instances by a staccato e leggerissimo sixteenth-note descending scale that begins where the words fade (Example 45).

At [V] Otello cries out that he cannot hear the words ("Le parole non odo!") with the foreboding quality of bassoons, oboes, and clarinets coloring the orchestration. His angry demand

"Dove son giunto?" in the fifth measure after [V] is doubled by five *forte stentato* chords played by oboes, clarinets, first bassoons, horns, violins, violas, and cellos.

The words of Iago and Cassio again become audible as they discuss the handkerchief that Cassio has found in his room (where it was planted by Iago). The dance-like woodwind and string accompaniment continues, now augmented by constant *staccato* eighth-note chords for the horns. Cassio gives the handkerchief to Iago who cunningly displays it behind his back for Otello to see.

The entire orchestra plays a fierce series of unison eighth notes culminating in four "reeling" low-register *tutti* trills as Otello recognizes his wife's handkerchief. The orchestral outburst ceases abruptly and Otello sobs that all is finished, supported solely by a *morendo* timpani roll.

At the *Allegro brillante* at [Y] Iago sings a rapid sequence of constant eighth notes *pianissimo e staccato* in which he gleefully and ironically tells Cassio that the handkerchief is "a spider's web from which there is no escape." First violins double the vocal line an octave higher while the second violins, violas, cellos (and later the clarinets, oboes, and bassoons) play constant *staccato* eighth-note chords, reminiscent of the frenetic "conspiracy" music so often found in Verdi's scores (Example 46).

Seventeen measures after [Y] Cassio begins a soaring "cantabile e dolcissimo" vocal phrase doubled by the solo flute and piccolo and accompanied homophonically by *pianissimo* woodwinds.

Cellos play constant off-beat pulses and the violins, violas, double basses, horns and three bassoons sustain high-register chords. The interruption of such a frantic, emotionally intense scene by this ironic, lyrical passage clearly portrays Cassio as an innocent —completely oblivious to the incriminating position in which Iago has placed him.

Iago resumes his menacing pianissimo molto staccato patter at [Z], while short lyrical phrases from Cassio and bitter comments from Otello sound sporadically throughout.

Nineteen measures after [Z], all three voices come together in three marcato C diminished chords followed a measure-and-a-half later by a fortissimo tutta forza orchestral version of the staccato sequence, effectively depicting the evil power of Iago's scheming. After four measures of this tutti outburst, the sequence returns to its pianissimo e leggero state, played by the flutes, oboes, first violins, and violas with regular quarter-note pulses from the cellos, double basses, bassoons, and solo horn. This reduced texture closes the scene, accompanying Iago's farewell to Cassio and Otello's cries of "Tradimento."

Six solo trumpets are heard offstage playing a triadic triplet fanfare figure. A single cannon shot is fired heralding the arrival of the Venetian ambassadors.[16] Cassio exits and Otello

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[16]Cannon fire is usually indicated by a single stroke of a large, over-sized bass drum. In modern performances, however, electronic audio-tape effects are sometimes substituted.

comes out from his hiding place vowing to kill Desdemona. The offstage chorus greets the ambassadors accompanied by the six backstage trumpets and supported by sporadic punctuations by full strings from the orchestra pit.

Iago suggests that Desdemona greet the Venetians with Otello in order to avoid suspicion. Solo flute, oboe, violins, and violas play pianissimo staccato eighth-note chords while the solo bassoon, cellos, and double basses play an off-beat downward octave leap which immediately brings to mind the evil motive associated with Iago in the first two acts of the work.

The offstage trumpets resume their fanfare calls, building dynamically through eight measures and providing an impressive orchestral bridge to the next scene of the opera.[17]

The reception of the Venetian envoys to Cyprus is depicted by a grand choral number which is characterized orchestrally by a lavish tutta forza dominated by fanfare figures.

Lodovico greets Otello in a quasi-recitative passage punctuated by rising fanfare flourishes for cornets, trumpets, and three trombones. The mood becomes more intimate as Lodovico turns his attention to Desdemona. A mournful piano e dolcissimo melody is played by the first violins accompanied by soft sustained chords for the remaining strings, effectively portraying Desdemona's

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[17] The Paris production of Otello in 1894 included a ballet that begins immediately after the sixth measure before [CC]. Following the ballet, the fanfare figures return beginning with the third measure before [CC].

sorrow as she sadly acknowledges Lodovico's salutation. Iago confides that Otello is displeased with Desdemona and Cassio, his words punctuated by closely-spaced cadences played by the oboe, clarinet, and bassoons (Example 47).

At [FF] Desdemona says she believes that Cassio will return to grace, her descending phrase accompanied by whole-note chords played by the strings. Otello snaps angrily "Ne siete certa?" ("You are certain of this?"). The tension of the situation is depicted by sustained tremolando tones played by the violins and violas. The solo bassoon and cellos echo the melody of Desdemona's plaintive phrase a third lower, and seven measures after [FF], Iago repeats Desdemona's statement for Lodovico's (and Otello's) benefit. The descending melody is here doubled by the solo oboe, musically indicating Iago's evil intent. Desdemona states that she has a special affection for Cassio in a long conjunct descending phrase which is doubled by the first violins and supported by legato quarter-note chords played by the remaining strings.

Otello tells Desdemona to be silent and a crescendo of tremolando strings indicates rising agitation. He raises his hand to strike her and Lodovico restrains him as four savage fortissimo chords for the entire orchestra convey the horror of the on-lookers.

Otello sends for Cassio who enters accompanied by a nervous sixteenth-note ostinato figure played by the second violins and violas (Example 48). Five heavily-accented tutti chords are played three measures before [I], followed immediately by a sustained

tremolando C-sharp minor chord played by the strings in their low register as Otello reads the Doge's proclamation (dropping his voice occasionally to taunt the weeping Desdemona in sotto voce asides). As he reads that Cassio is to be appointed the new governor of Cyprus, Iago utters a suppressed curse, his words "Inferno e morte" colored by a forte-piano chord played by oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns, and timpani.

At [JJ] Lodovico pleads with Otello to comfort his wife; Desdemona's tears are depicted by a series of descending semitones played by first violins and solo oboe (Example 49).

Four measures later, the violins, violas, and cellos play a furious descending sequence of fortissimo sixteenth notes followed by an equally animated rising staccato sixteenth-note scale played by the woodwinds, cornets, trumpets, three trombones, and full strings as Otello brutally throws Desdemona to the ground. His enraged command "A terra!...e piangi!" is made even more horrifying as it is left unaccompanied, creating a dramatic contrast with the frantic, explosive orchestral texture that immediately precedes it.

A series of ominous, over-powering chords are now played by the oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns, trombones, and strings supported by a constant piano timpani roll. Each of these instruments is scored in its lowest register and is placed in a closely-knit texture, producing a sinister and haunting aural effect (Example 50).

A single sustained pianissimo string chord emerges from this texture ten measures before [KK]. This lone chord provides the bridge to the ensemble-finale of Act III which begins in the next measure.

A descending pizzicato figure which effectively portrays Desdemona's fear is played in unison by the violas, cellos and double basses. Oboes, clarinets, bassoons, and horns play pianissimo punctuating chords creating a stark, suspenseful atmosphere as Desdemona pathetically states that her soul is frozen by Otello's treatment of her (Example 51).

At [KK] the violins and violas play a tremolando pianissimo e leggerissimo rising arpeggio which leads to a dolcissimo phrase in which Desdemona reflects upon the happy days of her relationship with Otello ("E un dì sul mio sorriso"). Tremolando first violins climb to a sustained B-flat while the piccolo and first flute double Desdemona's voice in "palpitating" repeated staccato e pianissimo sixteenth notes. The second flute, oboes, clarinets, first bassoons, and solo horn accompany her homophonically while tremolando second violins and violas, pizzicato cellos, flutes and clarinets punctuate between vocal phrases (Example 52).

At the stringendo seven measures before [LL], Desdemona sings of her despair and agony, the "sighing" descending semitone figures of the vocal line doubled chordally by the oboes, clarinets, violins and violas. Four measures before [LL], she passionately exclaims that the happiness of the past cannot disperse her bitter

sorrow in the phrase "Quel sol sereno e vivido." This section is accompanied by a "shimmering" orchestration of woodwinds, horns, and strings with Desdemona's first two vocal phrases being punctuated by a descending chromatic scale of detached sixteenth notes played by the solo oboe and pizzicato first violins and cellos. The second violins play a rapid thirty-second-note figure marked molto staccato e marcato which lends a sense of nervous urgency to her phrase (Example 53).

In the fifth measure after [LL], Emilia, Cassio, Roderigo, and Lodovico begin a pianissimo homophonic section in which they comment on the situation, accompanied solely by a single pizzicato tone for full strings at the beginning of every second measure and intermittent cries of "Pietà" and "Mistero" sung by the chorus.

Four measures before [MM] Desdemona resumes the melody of "E un dì sul mio sorriso" (first heard two measures after [KK]). Again this phrase is accompanied by pulsing, repeated sixteenth notes--now pianississimo e staccato--for full woodwinds, horns and strings.

Otello and Iago join the texture at [MM], Iago urging the Moor to take his revenge swiftly. The principals and the men's and ladies' choruses all sing independent lines in perhaps the most complex ensemble ever written by Verdi. Solo flute, oboe, and first violins play a relentless pianississimo dotted-triplet figure that dominates the orchestration for eleven measures while the bassoons, horns, second violins, violas, cellos, and double basses play a

rocking chordal alternation (Example 54).

The theme originally sung unaccompanied by Emilia, Cassio, Roderigo, and Lodovico five measures after [LL] returns two measures before [NN] for the same four characters, now doubled chordally by the clarinets and first bassoons. The chorus, divided into four parts, alternate quick fragmentary phrases doubled by pizzicato violins. Desdemona rejoins the ensemble three measures after [NN], with a "con espressione" descending chromatic vocal line doubled by the first oboe, first clarinet, and first violins and accompanied chordally by the second oboe, second clarinet, bassoons, horns, second violins, violas, cellos, and double basses. Two measures later, the orchestration is reduced to strings and sustained solo horn to allow the audience to hear Iago taunting Roderigo with the statement that "Desdemona will be leaving Cyprus tomorrow with Otello." Seven measures after [NN], the woodwinds rejoin the orchestral texture with the addition of solo flute doubling Desdemona's vocal line. Three measures before [OO], the strings are eliminated from the score, again making it easier to hear Iago's rapid, recitative-like conniving.

The dotted descending triplet figure of Example 54 returns at [OO] "come un lamento" alternated between the solo flute, piccolo, horn, violins, and violas as each character continues his or her independent vocal commentary.

At the Più mosso eleven measures before [PP], cornets begin a forte staccato fanfare call in repeated sixteenth notes which

accompanies quasi-canonic entrances for the chorus. The solo trumpet joins this texture in the next measure. Nine measures before [PP], the full orchestra accompanies the entire vocal ensemble (except Otello) in a noble, *forte* homophonic texture. The fanfare cornets interrupt the *tutti* in the eighth measure after [PP], this time augmented by trumpets and solo trombone in the next measure. The massive *tutti* returns and then Desdemona is left alone singing once more the sorrowful "E un dì sul mio sorriso" theme. Here, her passionate vocal line is supported by a nervous string figure characterized by a downward arpeggio followed by repeated tones (Example 55).

Cornets and trumpets in octaves play five *forte* fanfare unison E-flats in the measure before [PP]. Suddenly, a hushed, mysterious series of *pianissimo staccato* triplets begins, played by the oboes, clarinets, bassoons, and strings and moving homorhythmically with the voices. Horns and trombones punctuate the second and fourth beats of each measure with *pianissimo* chords. Marked *animando sempre poco a poco*, this texture builds dynamically with the string triplets played *tremolando* and a sustained *tremolo* for timpani being added five measures after [PP].

This passage leads directly to a tremendous *fortissimo tutta forza* rendition of the dolce "Quel sol sereno e vivido," first heard at the beginning of the ensemble four measures before [LL]. The melody is sung by Desdemona, Emilia, Cassio, and chorus sopranos, doubled in the orchestra by the flutes, piccolo, first

oboe, first clarinet, first cornet, first trumpet, and tremolando violins. The bassoons, trombones, cellos, and double basses double the vocal parts of Iago, Lodovico, and the chorus baritones in heavily-accented triplets. This incredible tutti passage culminates in a powerful unison allargando descending triplet scale for all voices and the entire orchestra in the measure before [QQ].

Abruptly, Otello orders everyone from the room, his single word "Fuggite" punctuated by a fortissimo chord for the full orchestra and an agitated descending arpeggio for violins followed by four frantic rising scale flourishes played by the violins, flutes, and piccolo. The remaining instruments of the orchestra play marcato syncopated chords indicative of Otello's uncontrollable rage.

Iago clears the crowd away, the turmoil of the scene depicted first by syncopated, repeated tones for the violins and violas followed by sharp accented chords for full strings.

A backstage banda consisting of four trumpets and four trombones plays a dense triplet fanfare figure as an offstage chorus is heard singing Otello's praises. Strings play a violent sixteenth-note rising figure which comes to rest on a tension-filled forte-piano tremolando chord played by the violins, violas, and cellos. Otello curses Desdemona, his word "maledico" reinforced by a shrill high-register scale flourish for the flutes and piccolo, a menacing sixteenth-note trill for fortissimo cornets and trumpets, and a single crash of cymbal.

The crowd disperses and the orchestra dramatically portrays the panic and fear of the people. The violins play a descending sequence of falling sixteenth notes, and the flutes, piccolo, oboes, and clarinets play a series of off-beat rising thirty-second-note scale flourishes. Horns, cornets, trumpets, trombones, bassoons, violas, cellos, and double basses provide an agitated chordal support.

Three measures before [SS], another agitato fortissimo tutti outburst is heard, complete with "shrieking" trills for flutes and piccolo and violent off-beat strokes of timpani, bass drum and cymbals as Otello again demands to be left alone.

A short mysterious pianississimo figure is heard repeatedly in the strings at [SS], colored by sporadic tones from the solo oboe and solo horn, which indicates that Otello is losing control of his senses. He deliriously raves about "il fazzoletto" and falls to the ground in convulsions. Woodwinds, violins, violas, and cellos play a series of diminuendo e morendo chromatically-descending triplets which portray vividly his physical and mental collapse (Example 56).

At [TT], an ominous drone is played by the cellos, double basses, bassoons, and trombones as Iago states that his poison is working. The offstage banda and chorus are again heard punctuating Iago's proclamation of victory. Sforzando tremolando chords played by the strings create an underlying evil tension. Five measures before [UU], the horns, cornets, trumpets, and full

strings play the repeating staccato triplet fanfare figure. Iago mockingly asks "Chi può vietar che questa fronte prema col mio tallone?" ("Who could prevent this forehead being crushed under my heel?") in a taunting descending vocal line doubled in unison by oboes, clarinets, bassoons, violas, and cellos.

The offstage chorus is heard unaccompanied four measures after [UU] singing "Gloria al Leon di Venezia." In a moment of pure dramatic genius, Iago points to Otello's motionless body and sarcastically exclaims "Ecco il Leone," his vocal cadence colored by a unison low-register trill played by the clarinets, bassoons, violas, and cellos. With a final exclamation of "Viva! Viva! Viva Otello!," there is one last burst of fanfare triplets played by the offstage banda and the cornets and trumpets of the orchestra pit. The strings, woodwinds, horns, trombones, timpani, bass drum, and cymbals play fortissimo chords on the first and third beats of each measure. Ten measures after [UU], the entire orchestra begins a long sequence of fortissimo chords which brings the act to an intense conclusion.

Act Four

The fourth act of Otello begins with a brief Andante orchestral introduction played by the woodwinds and solo horn, creating a mood of despair and impending doom. The first six measures of this prelude introduce three individual instrumental phrases which play a major part in the dramatic action of the scene that follows. The first of these phrases is a melancholy piano e dolce theme played

by the solo English horn which effectively portrays the sorrow of Desdemona.' In the fourth measure of the act this theme is punctuated by a second important musical motive—a mournful phrase consisting of three repeated eighth notes and then an eighth-note descent to two tonic C-sharps for three low-register flutes in unison. This phrase is followed six measures into the act by three half-note bare fifths played by the two clarinets which provide a haunting "tolling" foreboding of evil and death (Example 57).'

The flutes and clarinets play a plaintive piano theme three measures before [B] which is characterized by a unison rising eighth-note arpeggio followed by a harmonized scalar descent.

The violas, cellos, and double basses enter in the sixth measure after [B] playing a descending progression of pianississimo unison half notes as the curtain rises.

In the brief scene that follows Desdemona tells Emilia that Otello has bid her wait for him in the bed-chamber. She asks Emilia to make down her bed and to lay out her wedding dress as the three "death-knell" open fifth clarinet drones comment tragically on her predicament.

Six measures after [C] the solo bassoon and solo cello play a series of expressive high unison F's which lead to a pathetic "con passione" vocal phrase for Desdemona. Doubled chordally by flutes and supported by syncopated violin beats and a high-register counter-melody for the solo bassoon and solo cello, this phrase

effectively portrays Desdemona's suffering.

At [D], the clarinet drones introduce Desdemona's story of her mother's maid Barbara who was forsaken by her lover. Her rapid recitative-like monotone is supported by piano sustained chords played by the full strings. The feeling of sadness and despair is heightened as the English horn colors the phrase playing fragments of its melancholy theme in the fifth and sixth measures before [E].

At the Andante mosso at [E], the woodwinds play a short "pastoral" passage which serves as an introduction to the famous "Willow Song" (Example 58). The piccolo and English horn play a unison sustained F-sharp (three octaves apart!) and Desdemona begins the piece, the opening phrase being that of the English horn theme of the prelude. The violins and violas accompany with pianississimo sustained chords, while the English horn plays a related counter-melody which presages certain figures from Desdemona's vocal line. Unaccompanied, she sings "Salce" three times in falling minor thirds marked "come una voce lontana" ("as a distant voice").

The F-sharp piccolo and English horn drone is heard again at [F] and Desdemona's phrase is repeated with new text and slight rhythmic variations, still accompanied by sustained violins and violas and the plaintive English horn line.

Six measures before [G], Desdemona again sings the three unaccompanied "Salce's"--the first marked forte, the second piano diminuendo, and the third one pianississimo. In this instance,

the vocal phrase is followed by a fourth sounding of the falling minor-third motive for pianississimo English horn "come un'eco." The first verse concludes with a dolce vocal phrase "Cantiamo! Cantiamo!" supported by pianissimo sustained chords played by the woodwinds and strings.

The chamber-like woodwind introduction returns seven measures before [H] as an instrumental interlude. The second verse begins with the same vocal theme, but now accompanied by restless rising sixteenth notes played by the second violins and violas in thirds. The piccolo and English horn sustain their three-octave unison drone for six measures while the flutes play a oscillating trill figure. Nine measures after [H], Desdemona begins the second section of the verse on the words "e dalle ciglia" with pianissimo flutes and clarinets playing an agitated pulsing thirty-second-note figure supported by fifths played by the bassoons. The oboes and first violins color the texture with short four-note "espressivo" figures and the English horn sustains a low C-sharp pedal, reinforcing the desolate atmosphere of the piece (Example 59). The verse ends with the "Salce's" refrain, the English horn echo, and the dolce string- and wind-supported "Cantiamo" phrase. The woodwind interlude is played once more four measures before [J].

Desdemona's narration becomes more impassioned in the sixth measure after [J], and the orchestration conveys this with tremolando violins and violas playing high-register pianississimo chords, the piccolo sustaining a trill for six measures, and

restless syncopated chords played by two horns. Desdemona's "con espressione" vocal line is doubled by the oboes, English horn, and clarinets while the cellos and double basses *fortissimo pizzicato* punctuate the second beat of each measure. Five measures before [L], the woodwind interlude is played again, followed by a passionate four-measure descending vocal phrase for Desdemona, "Povera Barbara," accompanied homophonically by the woodwinds, horns, and strings. The second violins are left alone sustaining a low E while Desdemona, in a *pianississimo* monotone *parlante*, states ironically that her "story" is at an end.

At [M], the solo flute, English horn, solo bassoon, violins, violas, and cellos begin a "cupo" alternation of tonic and sub-dominant chords in F-sharp minor as Desdemona begins the final phrase of the song. Suddenly, she stops in mid-phrase and a *subito pianississimo* trill played by the first violins indicates the presence of danger. As Desdemona tells Emilia that she hears something, the oboes and solo clarinet play two wailing figures "come un lamento" over the ominous violin trill (Example 60). The flutes, piccolo, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, and full strings play a rising thirty-second-note scale flourish followed immediately by a *fortissimo* agitated trill played by the violins, violas, cellos, flutes, piccolo, and oboes. Desdemona asks hysterically who is knocking at the door, her rapid *parlando* text punctuated by a unison *diminuendo* descending chromatic scale played by the flutes and first violins. Emilia answers that it is the wind and the

dramatic tension relaxes. The orchestration thins to a sustained low-register *piano* trill for flutes and first violins, reducing further to a single sustained *pianississimo* D for flutes two measures before [N].

Her mind at rest, Desdemona resumes singing the last phrase of the song, the "cupo" chordal alternation accompanying as before at [N]. Nine measures after [N], the *dolce* "Cantiamo" phrase is heard for the third time, the first "Cantiamo" now supported by the woodwinds and one solo double bass alone, the second by *pianississimo* violins, violas, and cellos. Desdemona sings three final unaccompanied "Salce's" in falling minor thirds and then the winds play an elongated rendition of the woodwind interlude passage as Desdemona comforts Emilia in recitative-like vocal phrases. The solo clarinet plays an ominous *forte-diminuendo* D which sounds as if it may be another melancholy echo of the "Salce" motive but does not resolve to the minor third below as before. Rather, a series of somber F-sharp major chords is played by the flutes, English horn, clarinets, bassoons, and full strings as Desdemona bids Emilia "Buona notte." "Death-march" beats of the bass drum and double bass *pizzicati* punctuate on the first beat of each measure (Example 61).

As Emilia turns to leave, Desdemona cries "Ah! Emilia, Emilia, addio," with an impassioned descending vocal line doubled by the flutes, oboes, English horn, clarinets, and *tremolando* first violins. The bassoons, horns, *tremolando* second violins,

violas, cellos, and double basses accompany Desdemona with sustained chords as the women embrace in despair and anguish.

Emilia's exit is accompanied by a long mournful sequence based on the second motive from the prelude to this act--the three repeated eighth notes followed by a step-wise minor third descent. The motive is played by the flutes, oboes, and clarinets and accompanied by a pianissimo descending quarter-note chromatic scale played by bassoons, double basses and tremolando cellos. Seven measures before [Q], the motive is repeated più piano by the English horn and the solo horn, again supported by the descending chromatic scale.

This sorrowful passage leads directly to the Adagio at [Q], where a rich, almost-celestial muted string sonority suddenly creates an atmosphere of hope and salvation. The violins, violas, and cellos (all con sordine)[18] play a slow piano passage that accompanies Desdemona's sotto voce monotone prayer "Ave Maria" (Example 62). An effective shift to a lyrical style occurs at [R], where Desdemona's vocal line is doubled by the first violins and supported in turn by homophonic and polyphonic textures of second violins, violas, and cellos (Example 63).

One measure before [T], the opening string passage of the "Ave Maria" returns as Desdemona resumes her monotone chanting in fragmentary phrases. Nine measures later, the first violins divisi

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[18] From this point, the violins, violas, and cellos remain muted until [U].

start an arpeggiated ascent to a sustained A-flat^3 supported by legato part-writing for second violins and violas. The cellos sustain a low pedal A-flat. Desdemona sings the dolcissimo rising quarter-note arpeggio in the ninth measure after [T], sustaining an A-flat^2 for six beats and then returning to a low E-flat for a final chanted "Amen." She rises slowly, goes to her bed and lies down to await her husband. The second violins and violas play a pianissimo morendo sequence beneath the first violin sustained A-flat^3, effectively portraying Desdemona's peace of mind (Example 64).

At [U], there begins a brilliantly dramatic passage for muted four-string double basses[19] which accompanies Otello's entrance into the bed-chamber.[20] The mysterious legato theme begins on a pianissimo low E-natural for the muted double basses (the lowest note possible on a normally-tuned double bass), and eventually rises to a C-flat two-and-one-half octaves above in the second measure after [X]. The passage demands great agility and accurate intonation and, as Hughes points out, "played by anybody but really first-rate bass players the passage can be a miserable experience for performer and listener."[21]

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[19] Verdi specified "I soli contrabassi a 4 corde" to differentiate from the three-string double bass which was more common in European orchestras at the time but incapable of the flexibility and range required for this passage.

[20] This passage is included in Richard Strauss' edition of Berlioz's treatise on orchestration as a supreme example of writing for the instrument. See Hughes, Famous Verdi Operas, p. 471.

[21] Ibid., p. 472.

The theme is interrupted only by an ominous sixteenth-note staccato figure played twice by the violas and once by the second violins and followed each time by a pianississimo stroke of the bass drum which Boito described as "a shovelful of dirt being dropped into a grave"[22] (Example 65).

The entire sequence lasts for twenty-five measures and creates an atmosphere of suspense as Otello enters the room through a secret door, sets his scimitar on the table, and extinguishes the candles.[23] Five measures after [X], the muted double basses play an agitated descending staccato crescendo phrase followed in the next measure by a violent rising sixteenth-note scale and two fortissimo chords for orchestral tutti as Otello advances with "movimento di furore" towards the bed. He stops abruptly. A foreboding pedal tone is played by the bassoons and then the solo horn plays a sorrowful descending minor-third scale figure indicative of Otello's despair. Two measures before [Y], the solo bassoon plays another sustained F (an octave higher this time) and pianissimo flutes play the mournful descending figure. These two brief phrases indicate the love that Otello still bears for his wife and which stops him, momentarily, from wreaking his revenge.

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[22] Quoted in Godefroy, Studies, Vol. 2, p. 217.

[23] Verdi meticulously wrote in specific stage directions for this section in order to attain its ultimate dramatic potential.

At [Y], a shimmering pianississimo tremolo is played by the violins and violas while an eerie theme in A minor (derived from the first three measures of the double bass solo passage) is played by the solo bassoon and English horn in unison. This poignant melody portrays the anguish and suffering of Otello as he contemplates the sleeping Desdemona (Example 66). Otello thinks of his happy past with his wife and, at the più animato at [Z], there is a glorious modulation from A minor to A major as the "bacio" theme from the first act love duet returns. The theme is scored much as before, with tremolando first violins, oboe, and solo clarinet playing the melody and flutes, bassoons, horns, and tremolando second violins, violas, cellos, and double basses providing ethereal chordal support. Otello kisses Desdemona three times, with the actual placement of the kisses indicated in the score with written half notes (Example 67).

With the third kiss Desdemona awakes, and the orchestral texture thins to tremolando strings, bassoons, and horns. As she realizes that she is alone with Otello, a single, chilling pizzicato chord is played by the full strings.

At [AA], the violas and cellos play the mysterious staccato e pianissimo punctuating motive from the bass introduction to the scene, quoted in Example 65. In this instance, however, it is not followed by the bass drum stroke, but rather by a unison C in three octaves played by the cornets, trumpets, and trombones. This motive recurs throughout the following scene in which Otello accuses Desdemona of loving Cassio. As the dramatic conflict of accusations

and denials becomes more frantic, the orchestration likewise becomes more intense, characterized by staccato sixteenth-note movement, heavily-accented tutti chords, chromatic tremolando lines for strings, and a general increase of orchestral forces and dynamic considerations.

Six measures after [DD], the furious texture subsides and the clarinets and strings are left alone playing a gloomy pianississimo chord as Otello tells Desdemona that Cassio is "forever silent." There is a long dramatic pause and then Desdemona fearfully asks "Morto?", her question colored by a sustained low E played by the clarinet. Otello confirms her fear by coldly repeating the word "Morto" and Desdemona cries out that she has been betrayed, supported by a fortissimo chord played by the oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns, cellos, double basses, and tremolando violins and violas.

The agitated tutti orchestral texture resumes as Otello throws Desdemona on the bed and smothers her. Her blood-curdling scream is reinforced by a tremendous tutta forza texture of eighth-note triplets, with loud on-beat strokes of the timpani, bass drum, and cymbals, and agitated tremolando C's in octaves for double-stopped cellos (Example 68).

This furious outburst is followed in the twelfth measure after [EE] by a syncopated progression of fortissimo quarter-note chords which subsides to three "convulsing" whole-note chords played by the horns, cornets, trumpets, and trombones, depicting

Otello's cruel "choking" thrusts. Six measures before [FF], the orchestral texture diminuendo sempre più rests on a pianissisimo sustained chord played by the strings and bassoons as Otello utters the words "Calma come la tomba."

Emilia enters and tells Otello that Cassio has killed Roderigo. Suddenly, the dying Desdemona is heard murmuring in a pianissimo stentato monotone that she has been murdered unjustly, her words accompanied by a chordal drone played by the violas, cellos and double basses. In a melancholy falling minor-third figure, she states that she dies innocent. Ten measures after [FF], a series of pianissimo whole-note chords played by the violins, violas, cellos, flutes, solo oboe, and first bassoons creates a mournful musical background as Desdemona, in broken descending phrases, asks Emilia to commend her to Otello. She again states that she is innocent, her last word "addio" framed by two pizzicato punctuations played by the violins, violas, and double basses.

There now comes a passage of rapid unaccompanied recitative dialogue in which Otello admits that he has killed his wife because she was unfaithful to him. He tells Emilia that Iago has provided the proof. In disbelief, Emilia runs to the door and calls for help. As she screams that Otello has killed Desdemona, the orchestra reinforces the drama with three measures of agitato syncopated chords played by the second violins, violas, oboes, clarinets, and horns and a furious rising sequence of descending sixteenth notes played by the first violins. Nine measures before

[HH], a *fortissimo* sustained chord is played by three flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, and the full brass section, and the strings play two measures of descending sixteenth notes as Cassio, Iago, and Lodovico rush into the room. Their cries of horror are punctuated by *marcato* off-beat chords played by the oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns, violas, cellos, and double basses, supported by a nervous oscillating figure played by the violins.

Three measures before [HH], the first violins play an intense *pianissimo tremolo* as Emilia tells Iago to refute Otello's statement. Her request is punctuated by four *fortissimo* chords from the entire orchestra.

Immediately, a repeated figure is played by the clarinets, colored by the bassoon, as Emilia asks her husband if he thought Desdemona untrue. A sharp *pizzicato* stroke played by the full strings and a single beat of the timpani emphatically mark her question. Unaccompanied, Iago admits that he did, and Otello quickly refers to the incriminating handkerchief in a detached, descending phrase doubled chordally by the oboes and clarinets. The cello section, solo bassoon, and horns play a constant eighth-note pulse helping to create an atmosphere of explosive intensity. Eleven measures after [HH], Emilia says that she will reveal all as a tension-filled series of chromatically-rising half-note *tremolando* chords is played by the full strings. Iago tells her to be silent. Emilia refuses, a rising sixteenth-note scale played by the violins and flutes and supported by brass chords

portraying her determination. She tells how Iago forcibly took the handkerchief from her, Cassio states that he found the handkerchief in his quarters, and Montano arrives to tell that the dying Roderigo has confessed all. This entire section of revelation is supported by a descending homophonic passage played by the oboes, clarinets, and bassoons, with each statement being punctuated by a quick thirty-second-note scale flourish from the strings.

At [JJ], Otello implores Iago to deny these charges and Iago flees from the room, his flight depicted by a rising progression of sixteenth notes played by the flutes, solo oboe, and violins while the clarinets, bassoons, horns, violas, cellos, and double basses play a descending series of marcato eighth-note chords. Otello grabs his scimitar six measures before [LL], and desperately demands "E il ciel non ha più fulmini?" ("And has heaven no more thunderbolts for me?"). His tormented vocal phrase is accompanied by a fortissimo chord played by tremolando strings, bassoons, and horns followed by a violent three-beat chromatic rush of staccato sixteenth notes for the entire orchestra. Lodovico orders Otello to surrender his sword in an unaccompanied command followed by a fierce tutti chord. Otello angrily asks Lodovico if he dare disarm him, a tremendous tutta forza orchestral texture depicting his defiance. Five measures before [MM], Otello realizes the hopelessness of the situation. A three-measure descending chromatic scale played by the violins diminuendo sempre indicates his acceptance of the tragedy. This long scale subsides into a morendo sustained

G played by the violins in octaves two measures before [MM].

At [MM], the entire orchestra plays a series of eleven whole-note chords. These detached "death-knell" drones accompany as Otello solemnly assures all that no one need fear him in the monotone, almost-religious vocal passage "Niun mi tema" (Example 69).

Following a passionate, ironic cry of "Oh! Gloria" supported by majestic full chords from the woodwinds and brass, Otello bitterly murmurs the phrase "Otello fu" ("Otello was"). Four pianissimo strokes of bass drum and pizzicato double basses comment dramatically on this pathetic acceptance of fate.

Three measures before [NN], a plaintive, descending melody is played by the solo oboe and supported by pianississimo chords played by clarinets and solo horn. Otello gazes at Desdemona's lifeless body and begins the tragic unaccompanied vocal phrase "E tu...Come sei pallida! e stanca, e muta, e bella," described by Toye as "the most beautiful, the most moving passage of the opera."[24] Piano strings color the cadence on the final word "bella" and then continue to accompany the remainder of Otello's mournful soliloquy with a chordal texture. Regular "death-march" pianississimo timpani strokes punctuate beginning in the eighth measure after [NN], and a pianissimo e dolcissimo figure of rising and falling staccato triplets creates a "celestial" atmosphere as

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[24] Toye, Verdi, p. 252.

Otello refers to Desdemona as "in cielo assorta" ("absorbed into heaven").

Two measures before [00], Otello calls out to Desdemona and with three agonizing sobs reminds himself that she is dead. His desolation and despair is emphasized by the complete lack of accompaniment.

Five closely-spaced chord clusters played by the trombones stringendo e crescendo at [00] dramatically indicate the presence of death as Otello exclaims that he is still armed (Example 70). A fortissimo chordal crash for orchestral tutti is played as Otello stabs himself. This violent outburst is followed immediately by a diminuendo chromatic descent of quarter notes played by the woodwinds and tremolando violins, violas, and cellos which comes to rest on a pianississimo tremolando low-register chord for strings alone.

From this "trembling" orchestral texture comes the minor-mode theme first heard as Otello stood over his sleeping wife earlier in the scene. Indicative of the Moor's anguish, the theme is played by English horn, solo clarinet, and bassoon accompanied by a sostenuto texture of tremolando violins and violas. Supported by this mournful orchestration, Otello pathetically recalls that he had kissed Desdemona before he killed her. He continues with fragmented "gasps" of text "Or morendo...nell'ombra in cui mi giacio..." ("Now dying...in the shadow in which I lie..."). Suddenly at [QQ], in perhaps the most moving reminiscence passage in all of opera, the

"bacio" theme emerges, played in unison by the solo oboe, clarinet, and tremolando first violins and supported by sustained chords in the flutes, second clarinet, bassoons, horns, double basses, and tremolando second violins, violas, and cellos. Otello interjects three final morendo vocal phrases—"un bacio...un bacio ancora... ah, un altro bacio."

A solemn sequence of descending whole-note chords is played by the clarinets, violins, and violas over a sustained minor sixth played by double-stopped cellos and bassoons and a tremolando E pedal for the double basses. This phrase resolves to a long final E major chord for every instrument in the orchestra as Otello dies and the curtain slowly falls (Example 71).

CONCLUSION

There is little doubt that Otello is Verdi's greatest masterpiece. It combines the melodic individuality that had been the composer's trademark since the outset of his career with an advanced orchestration technique that had developed gradually with each opera.

Verdi is considered by most scholars to be one of the greatest composers of dramatic music. This recognition is due largely to his intuitive ability to compose music that effectively conveyed the dramatic events and moods of his texts. His unparalleled gift for melodic-writing and his natural affinity for the theater made him the most popular operatic composer of his day.

In the works from Macbeth on, there is a clear indication that Verdi was taking the dramatic ability of his orchestra more seriously. He had discovered that particular tonal colors--either of individual instruments or in combinations--could greatly strengthen the dramatic potential of his works. Also, the number of instruments and the manner in which they were deployed within the orchestral texture had a large bearing on the dramatic effect that was achieved.

In spite of the criticism it has received for being "Wagnerian" in nature, Otello is an opera in the established Italian tradition. It is a work in which the voice is still supreme and which contains most of the conventional devices used by Rossini, Bellini, and Donizetti—the storm scene, victory chorus, brindisi, prayer scene, ensemble finale, and the vengeance duet. In Otello, however, these conventions emerge naturally from the dramatic development of the opera.

During the fifty-four years of his career, Verdi had gradually developed his ability to utilize the orchestra for dramatic revelation. Otello represents the apex of that development. The use of the orchestra in Otello is in every instance prompted by an instinctive knowledge of the resulting dramatic effect, and his mastery of orchestral technique contributes largely to Otello's position as possibly the greatest of all Romantic operas.

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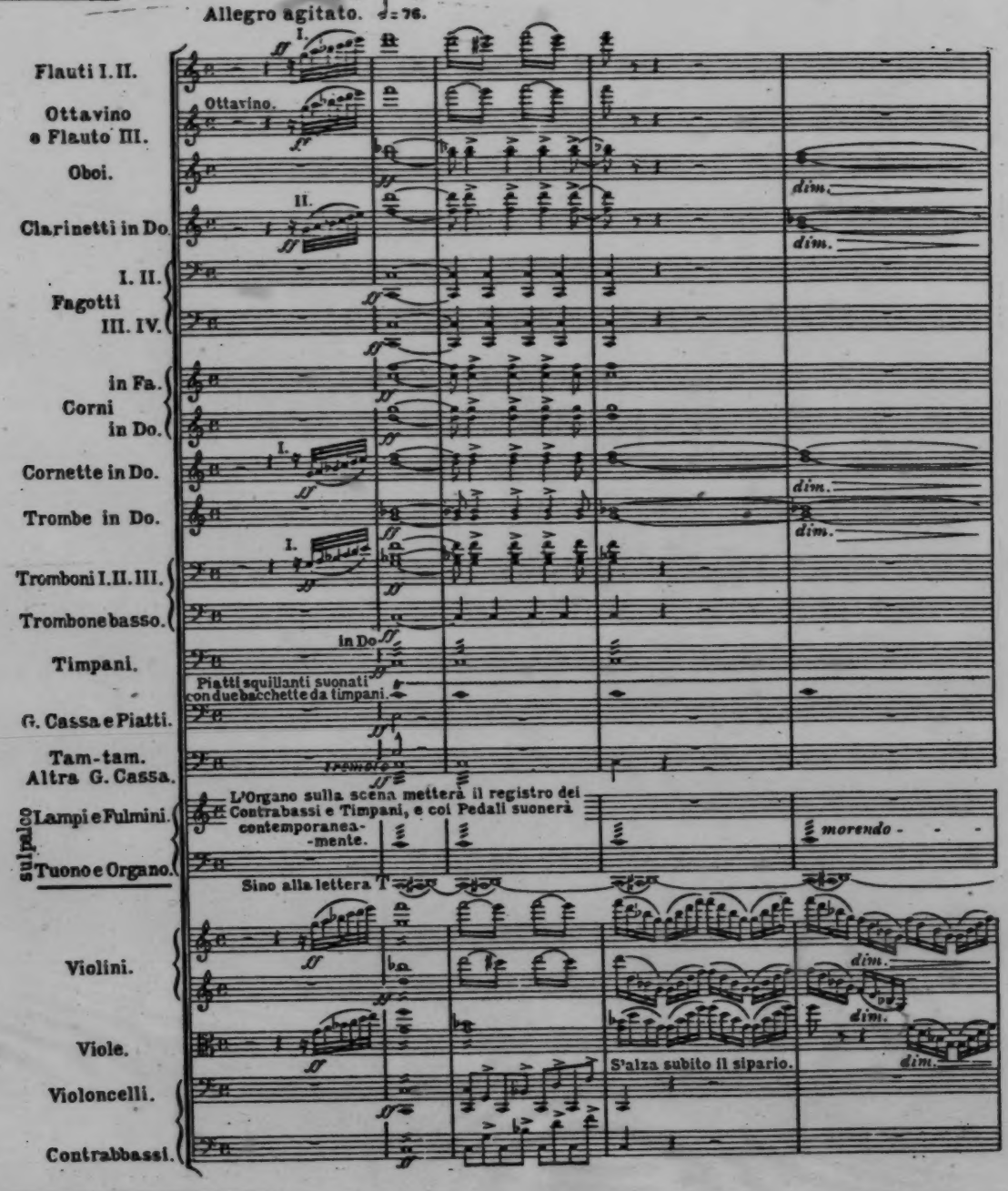

[1]All page numbers refer to Otello, full orchestral score (Milan: Ricordi, c1913).

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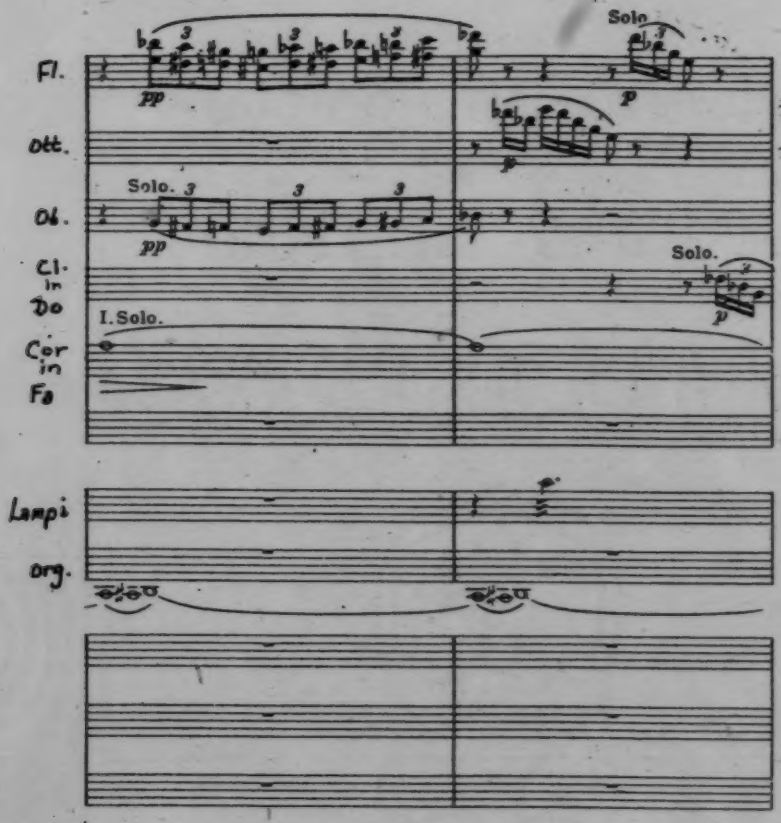
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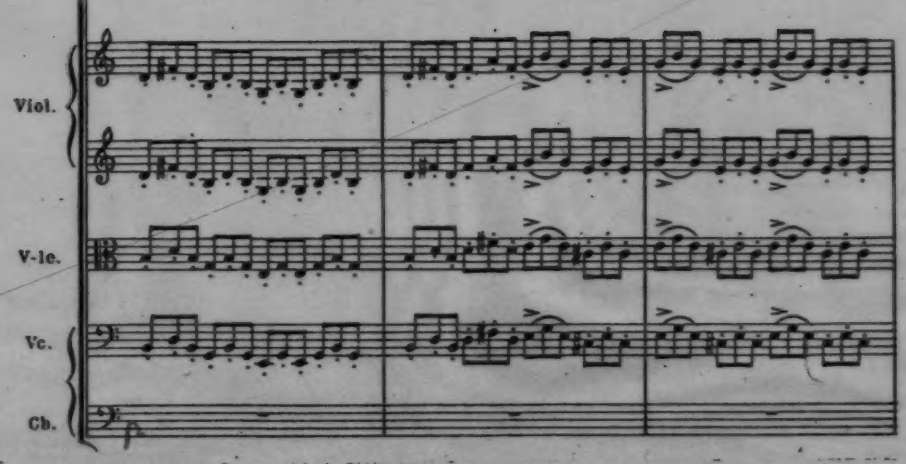

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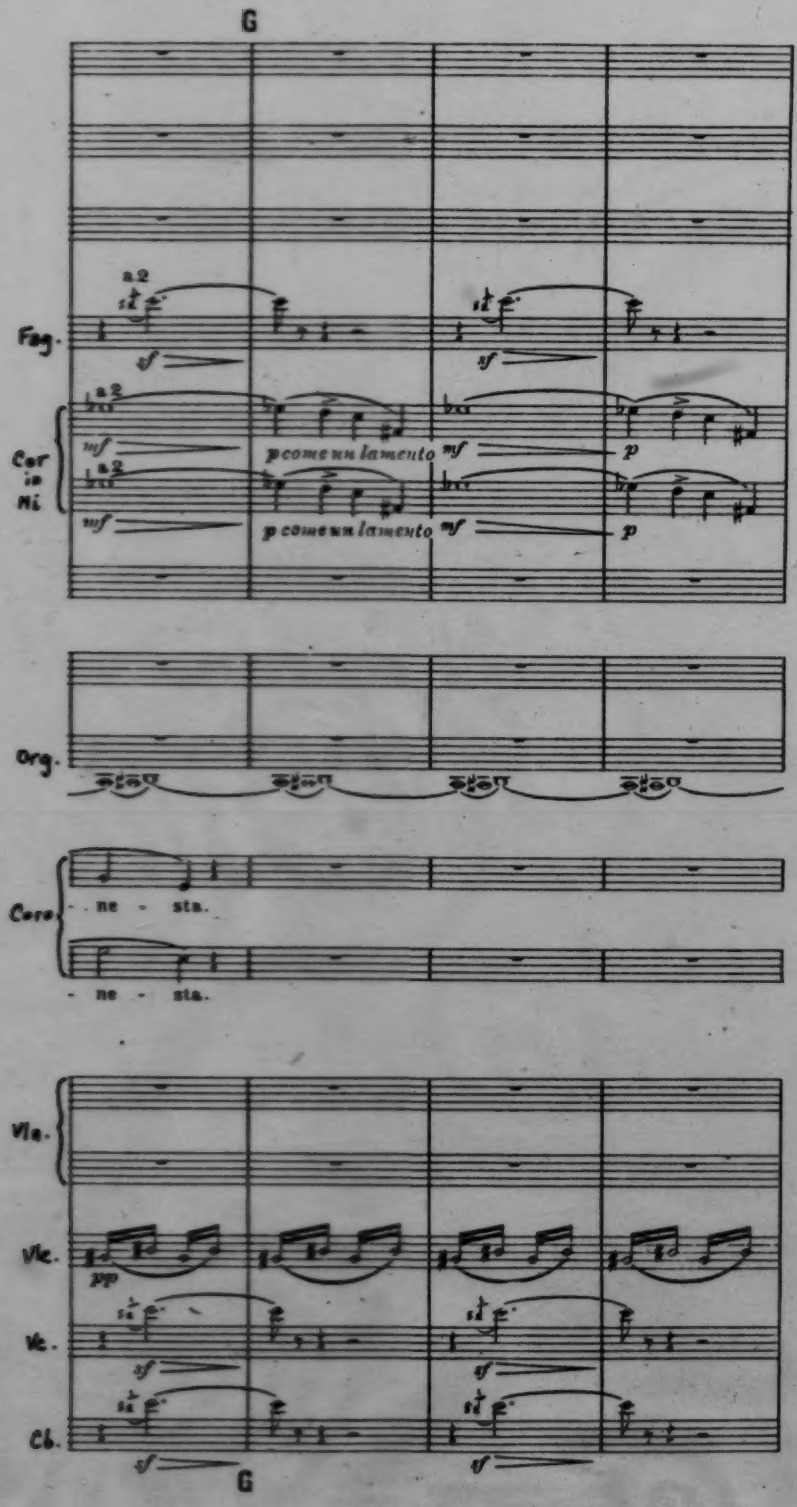
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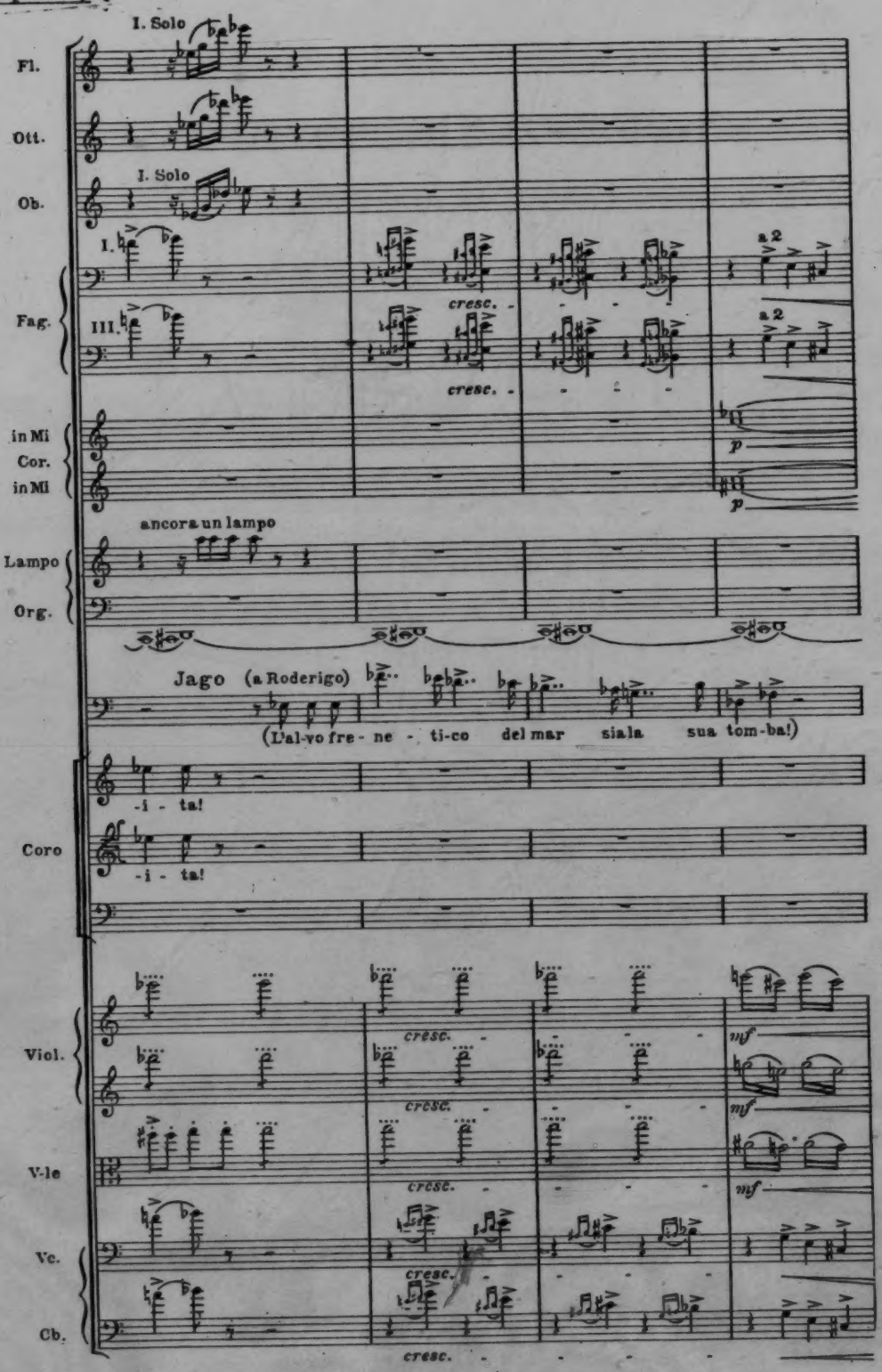
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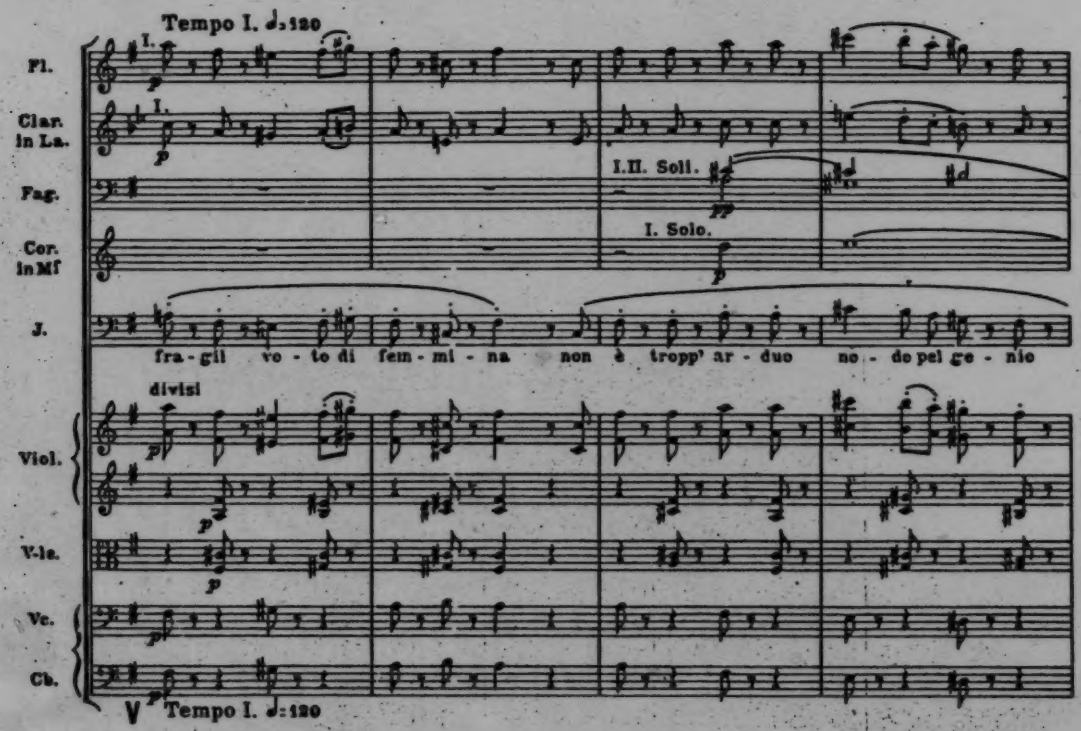
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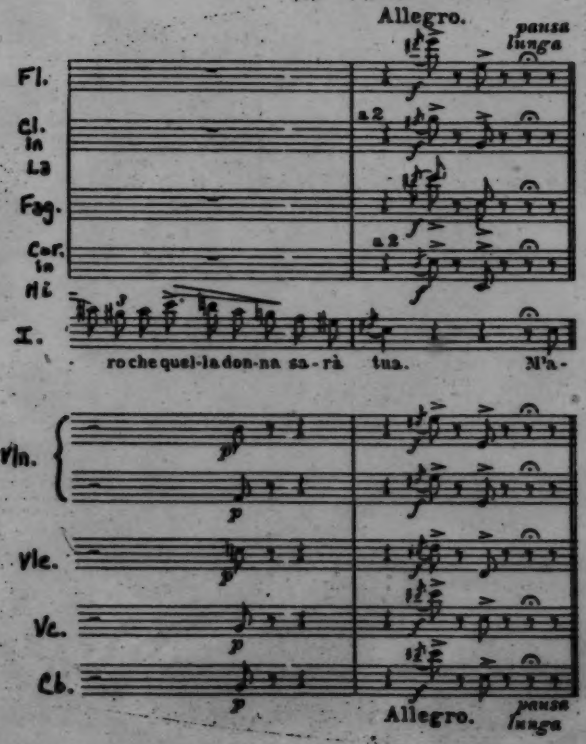
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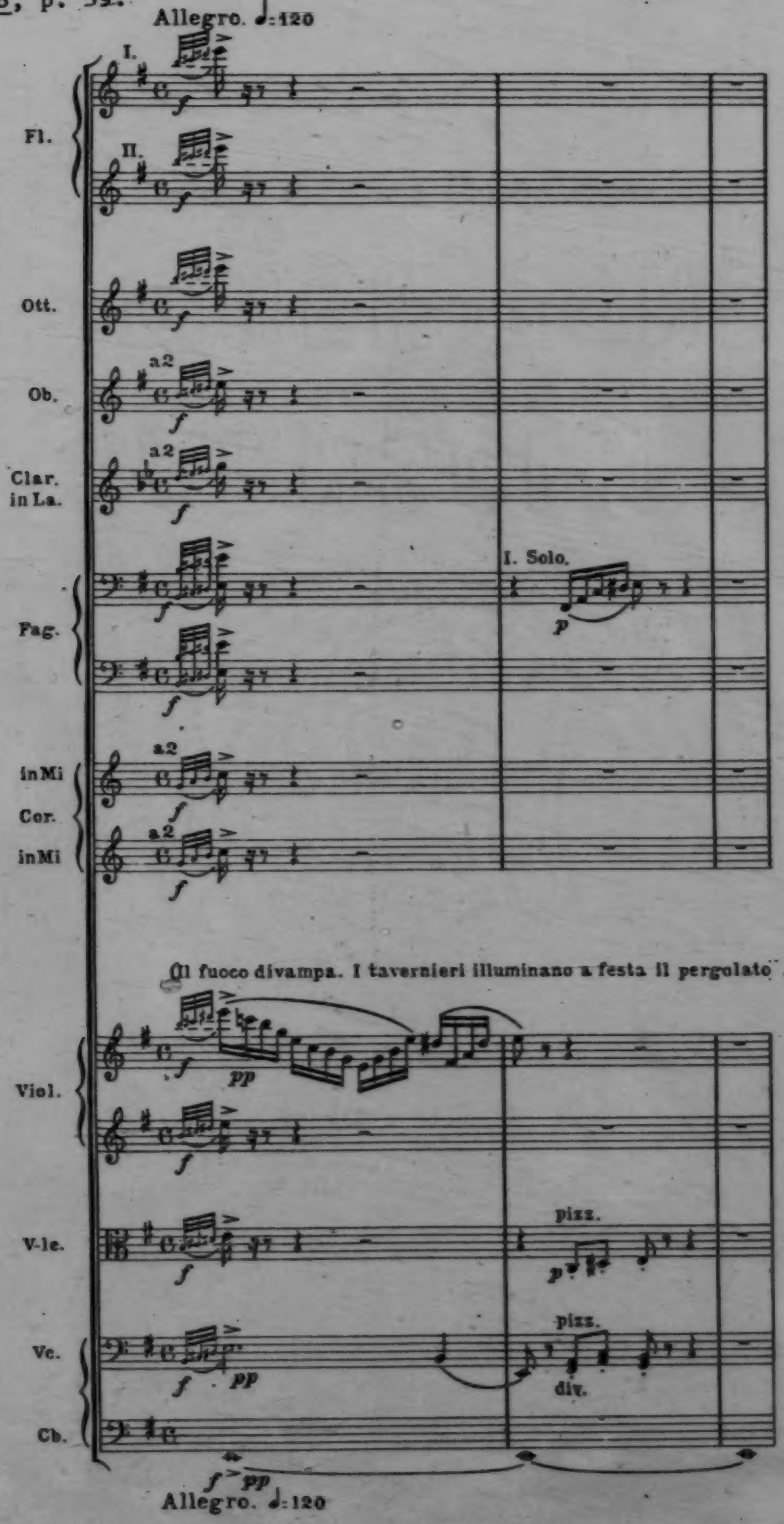
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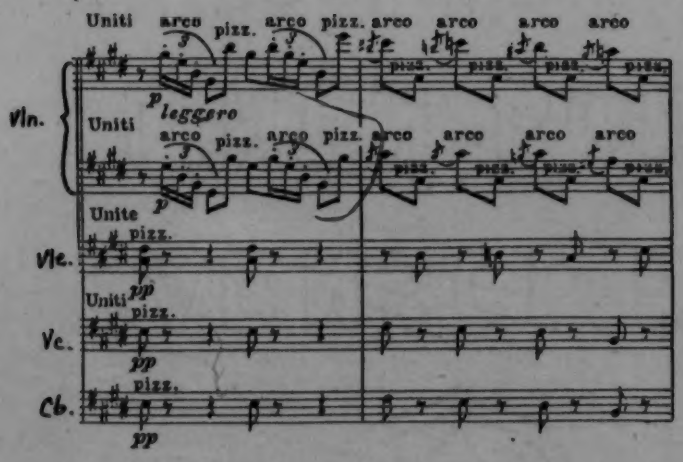

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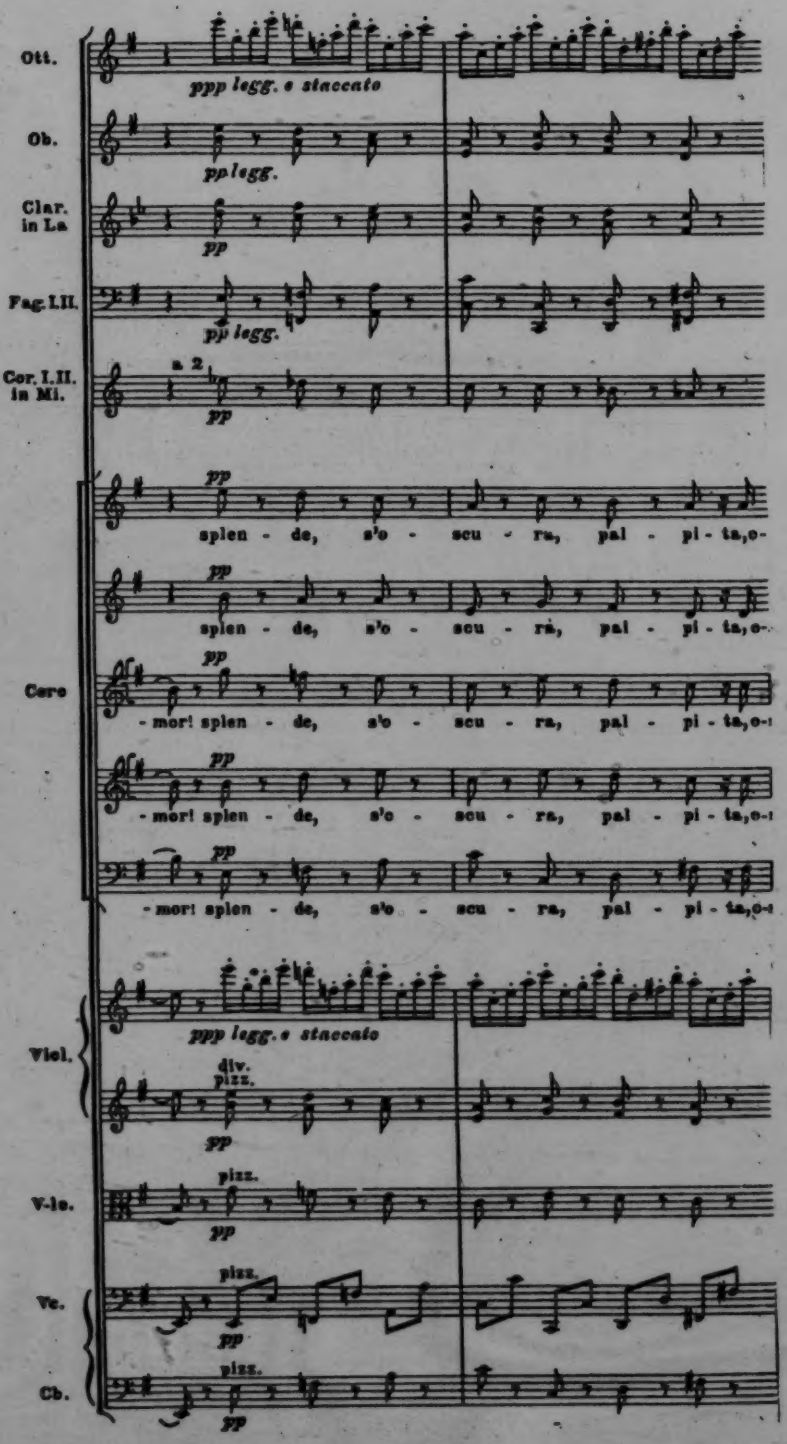

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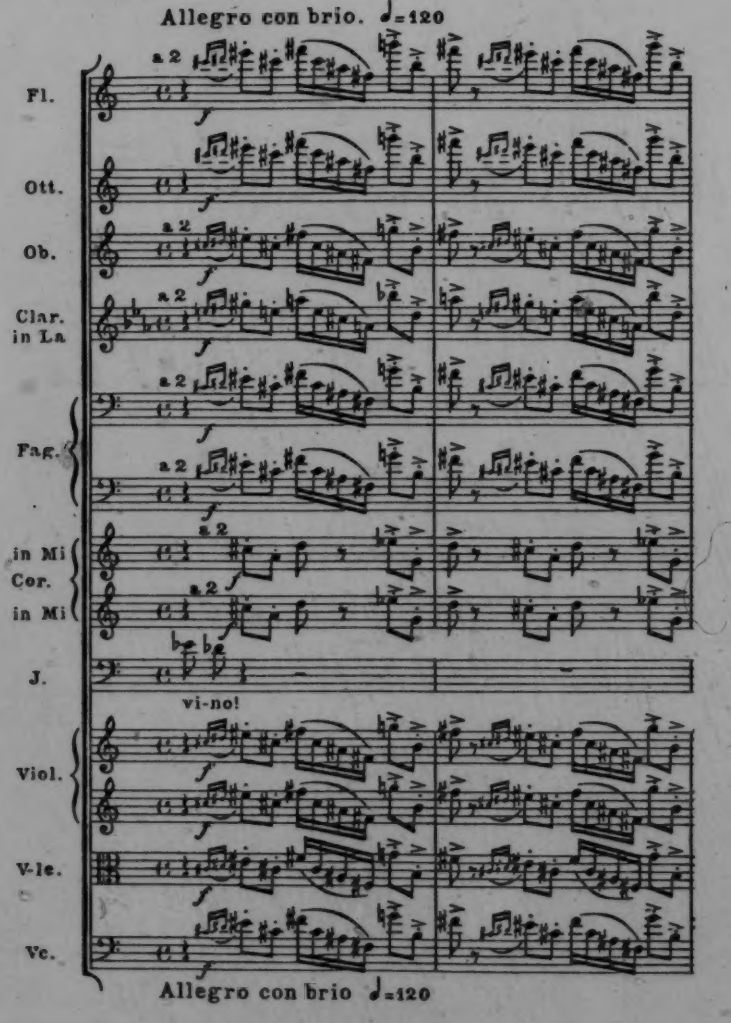
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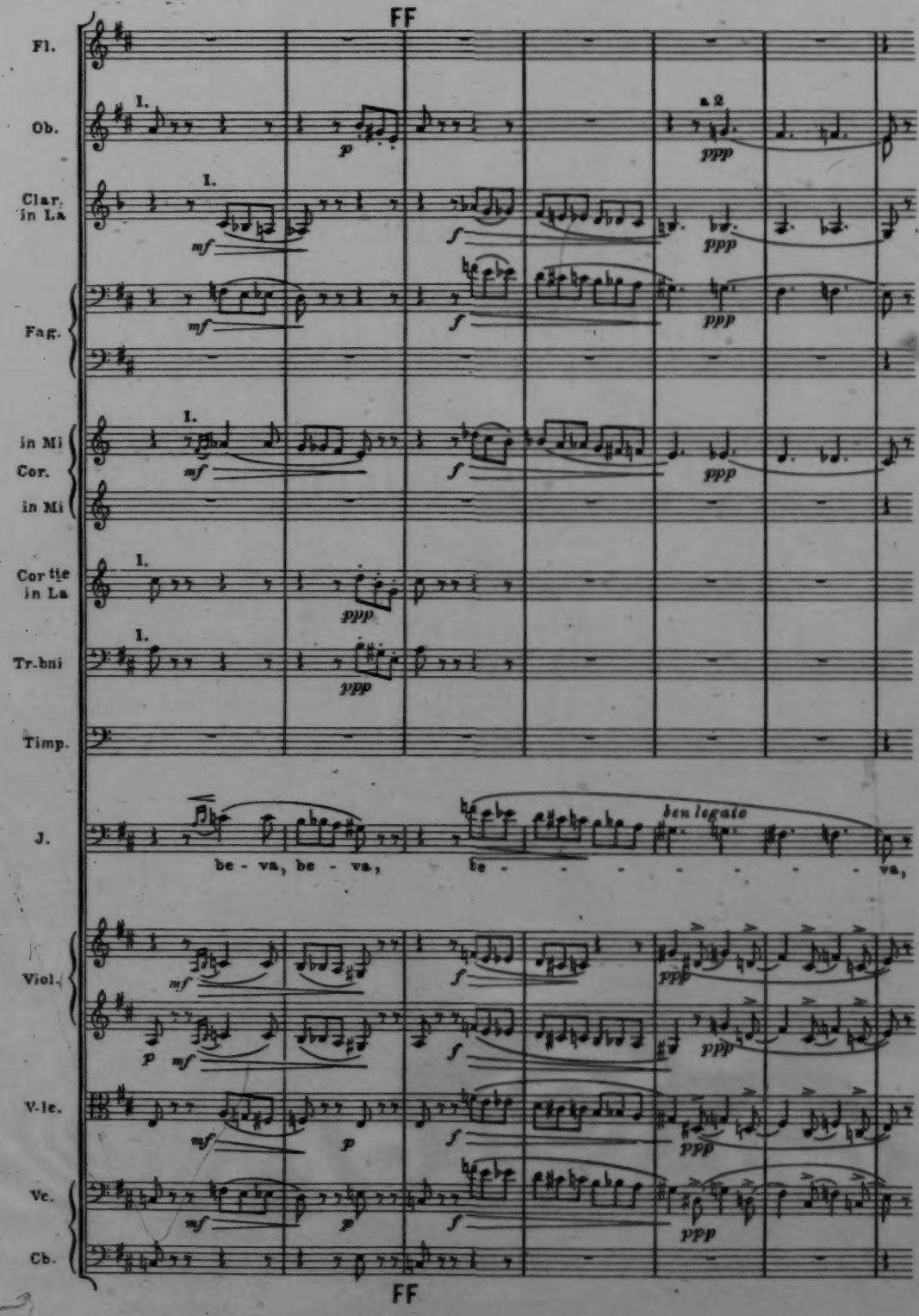
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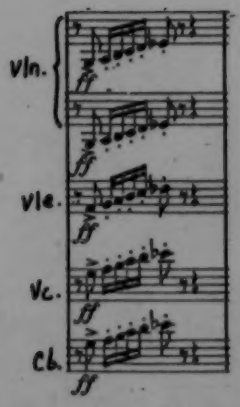

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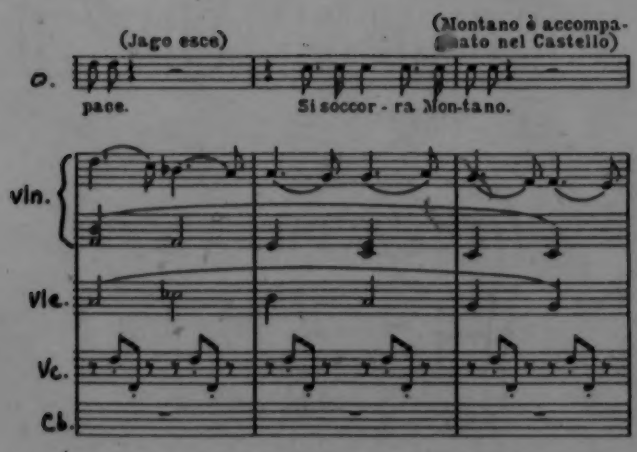
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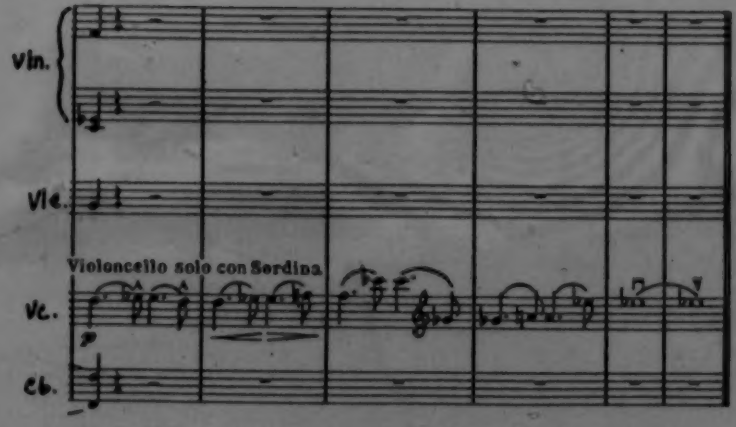

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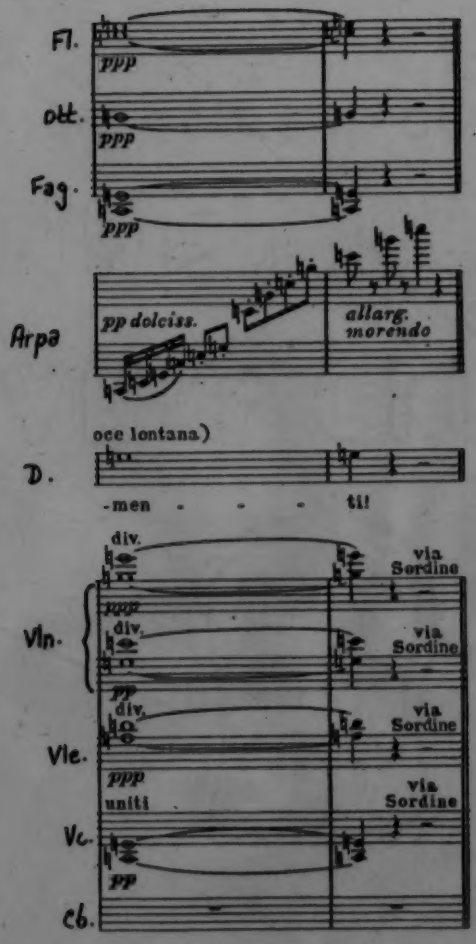
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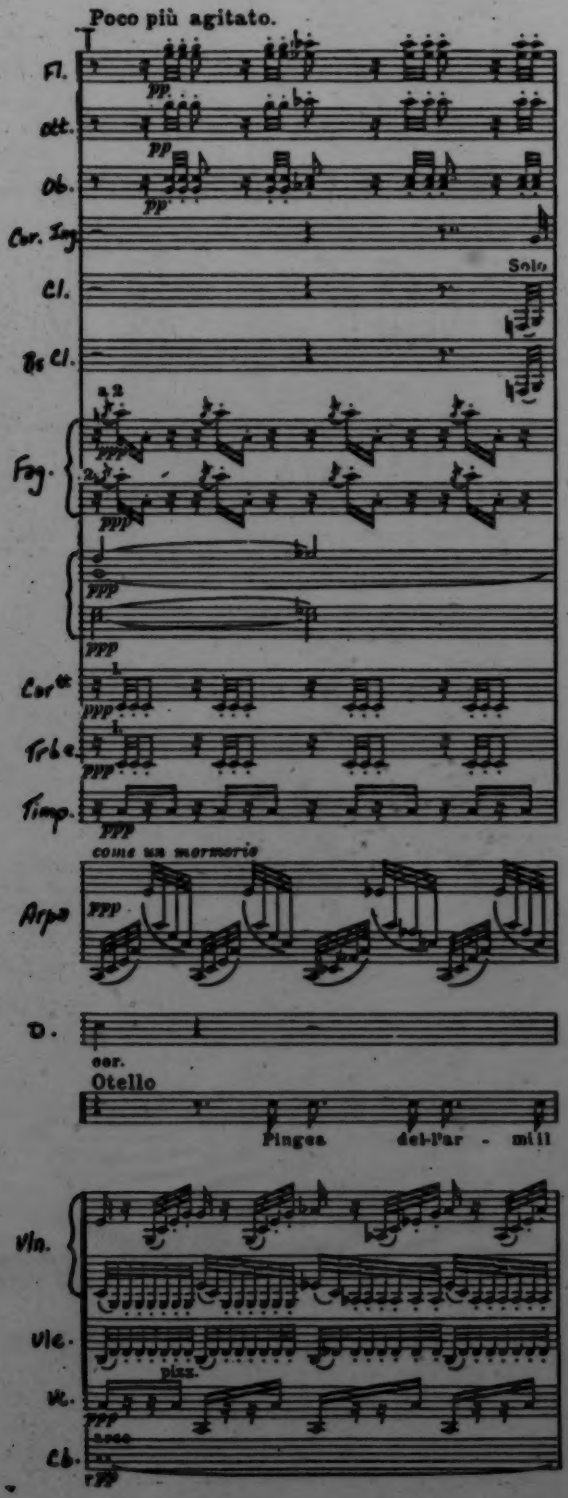
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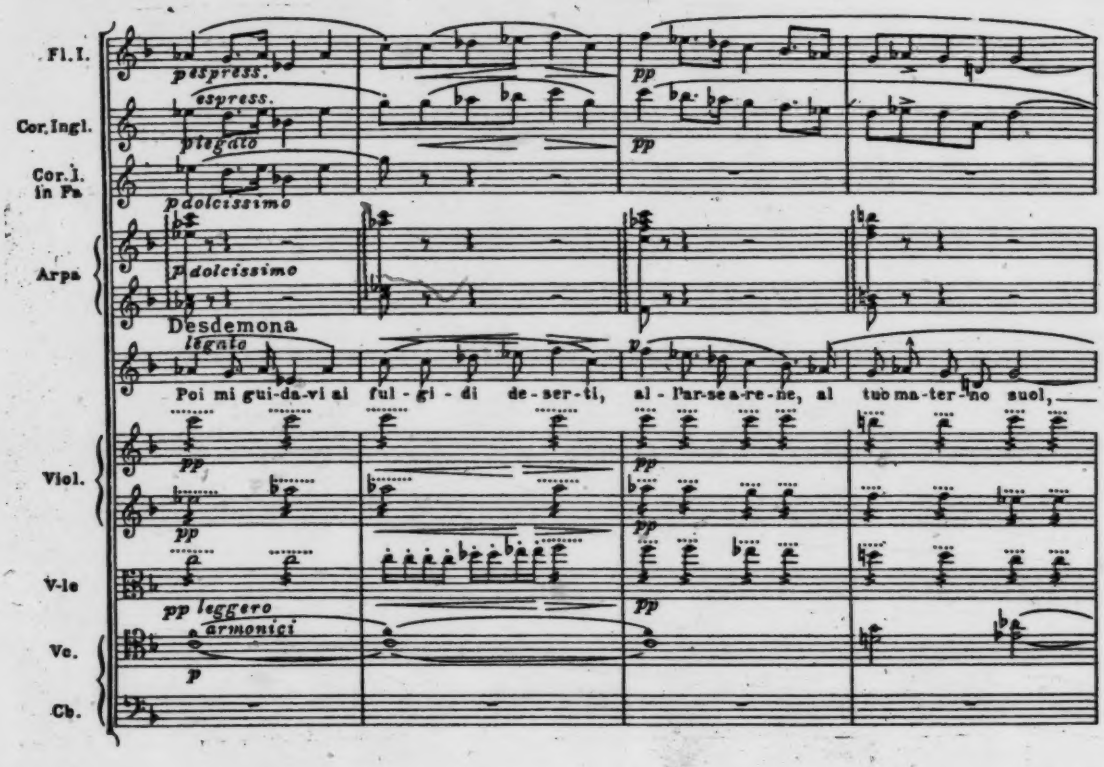
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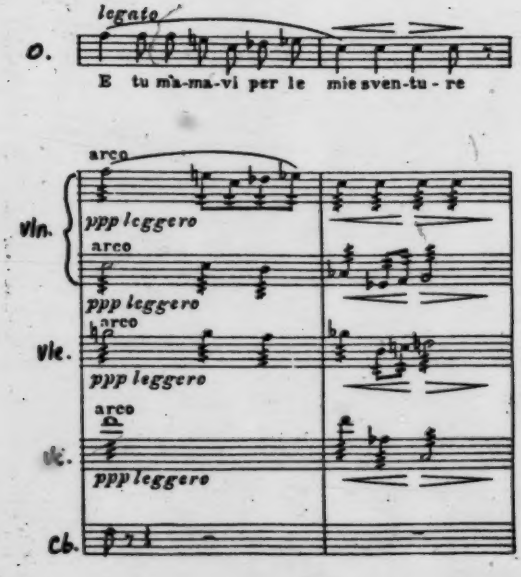
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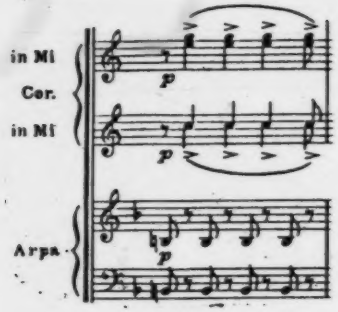
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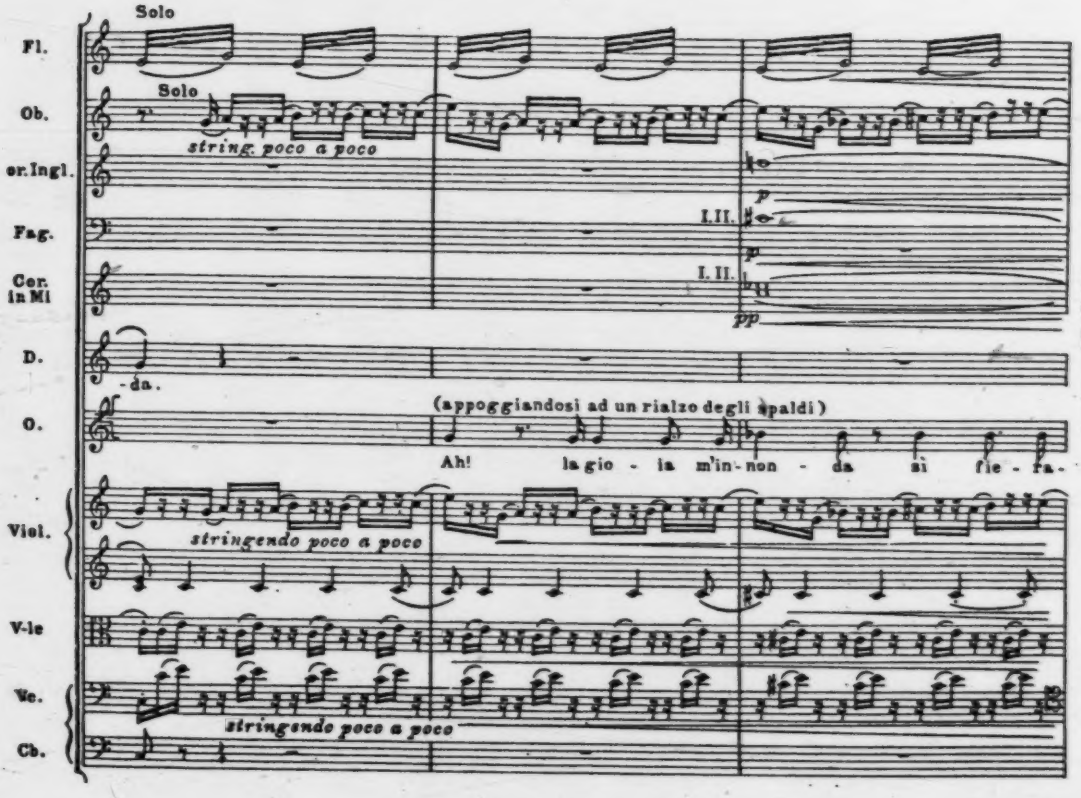
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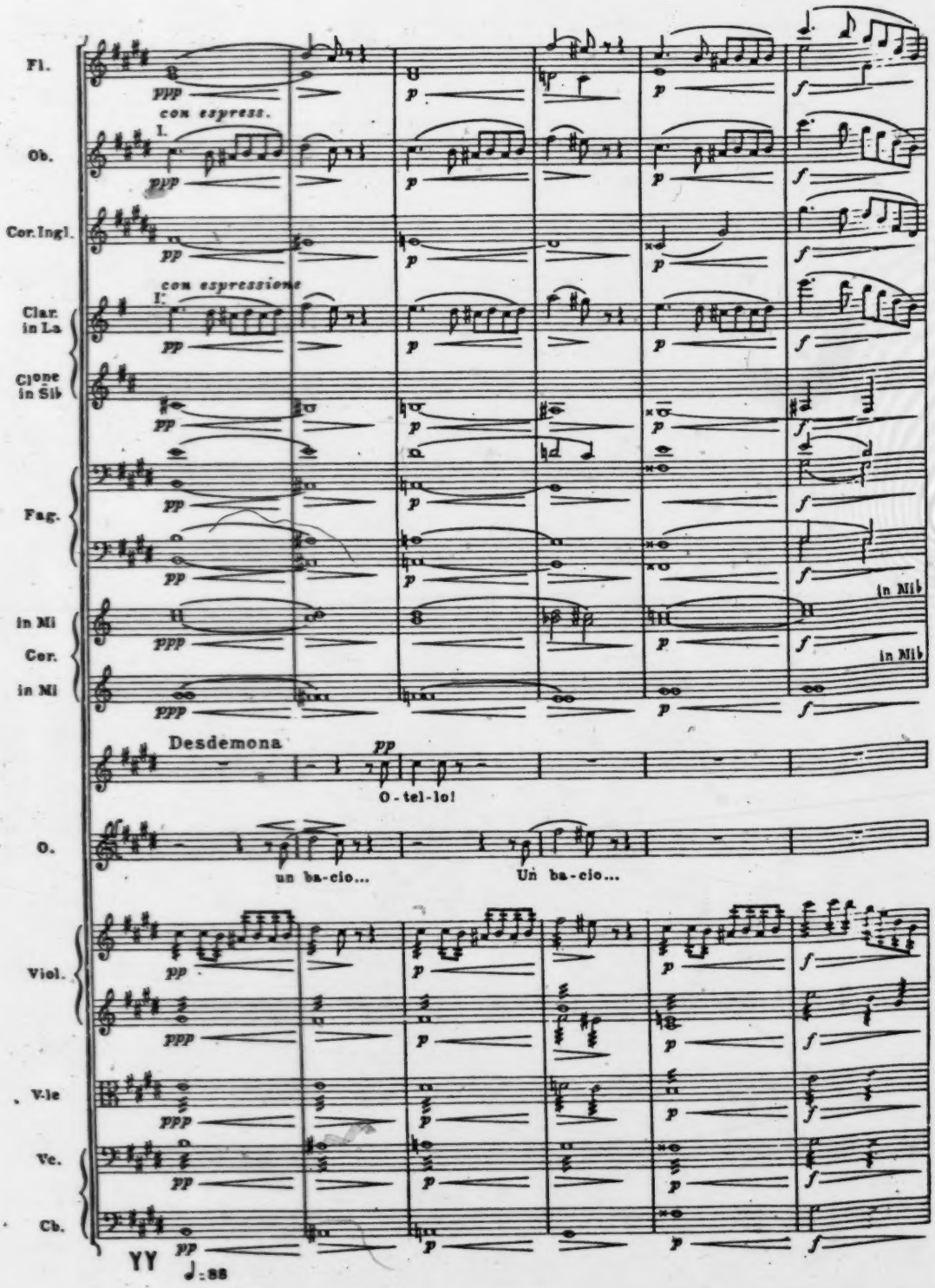
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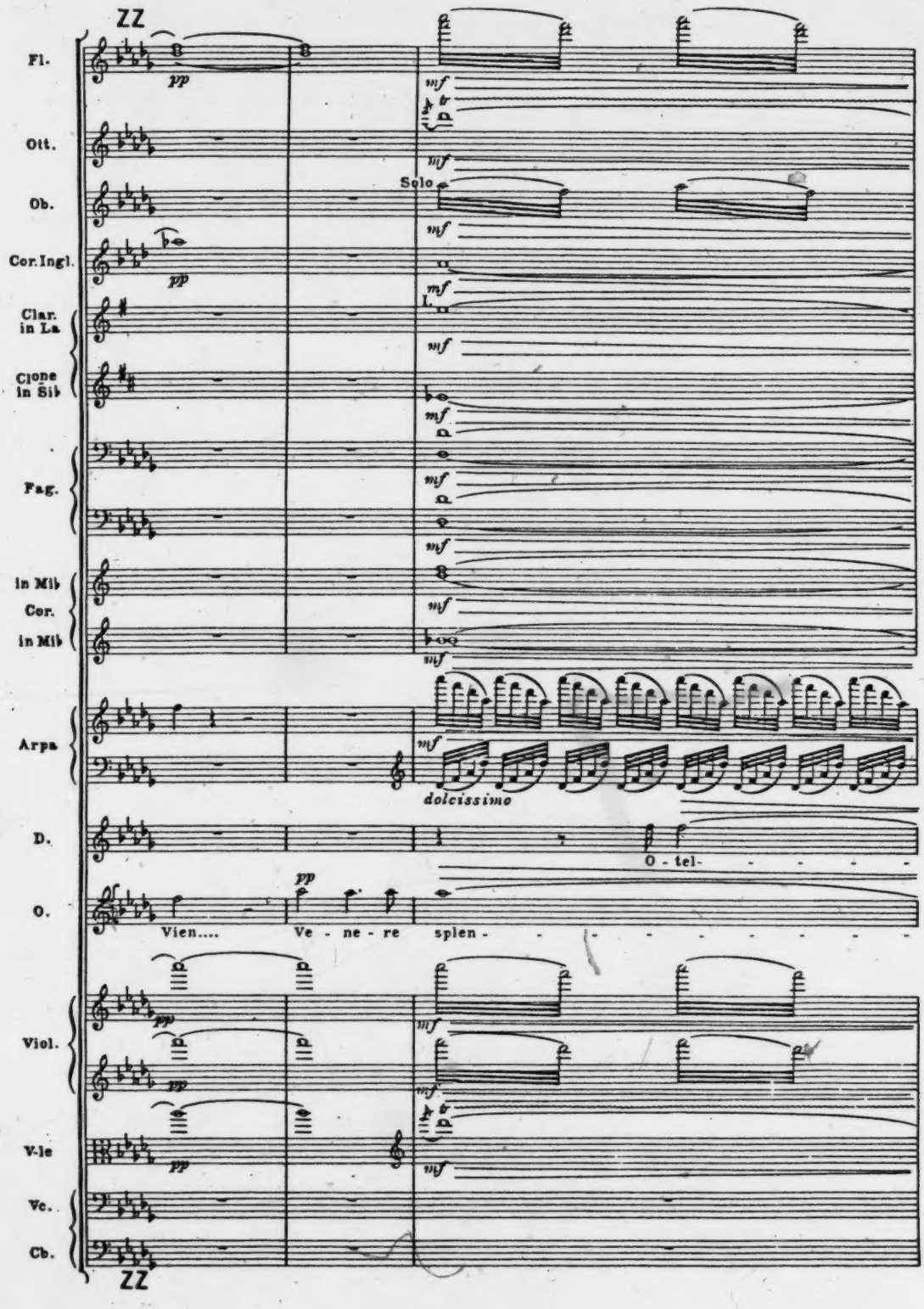
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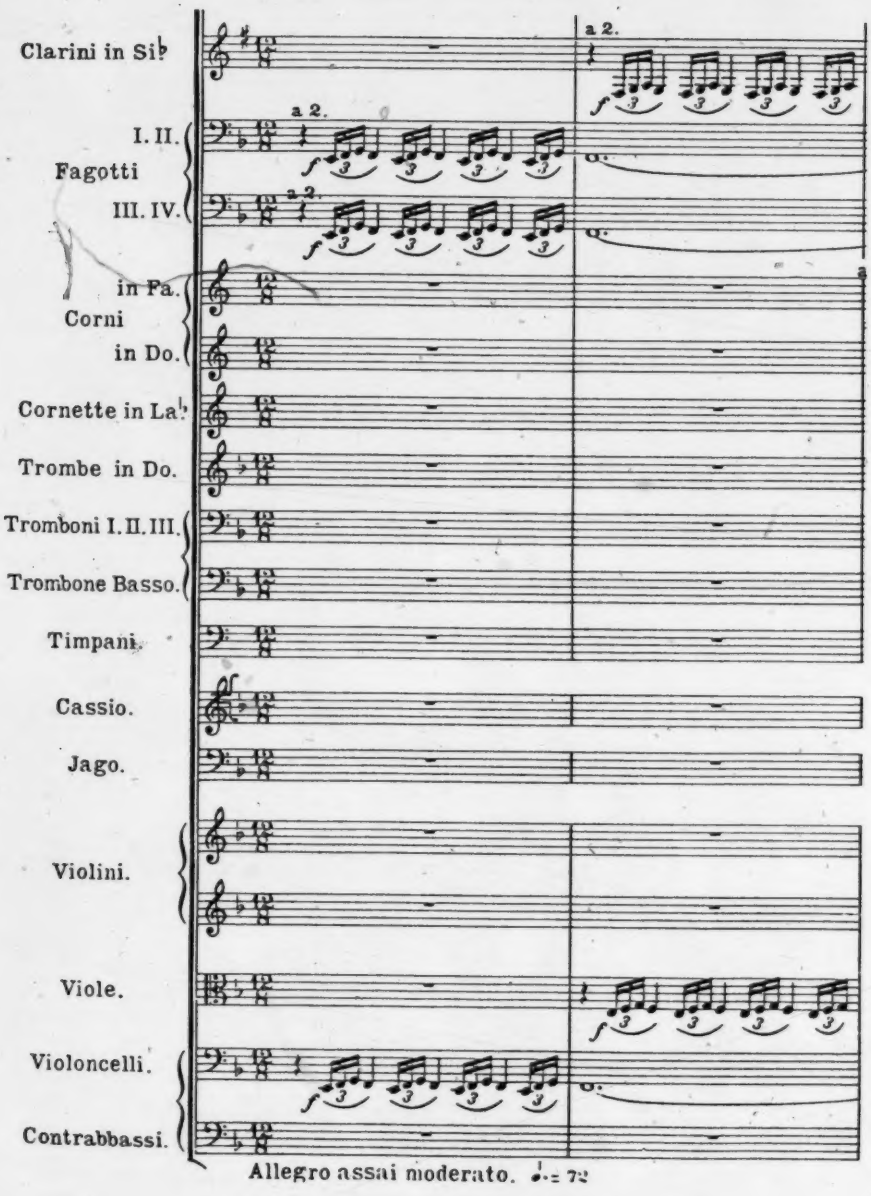
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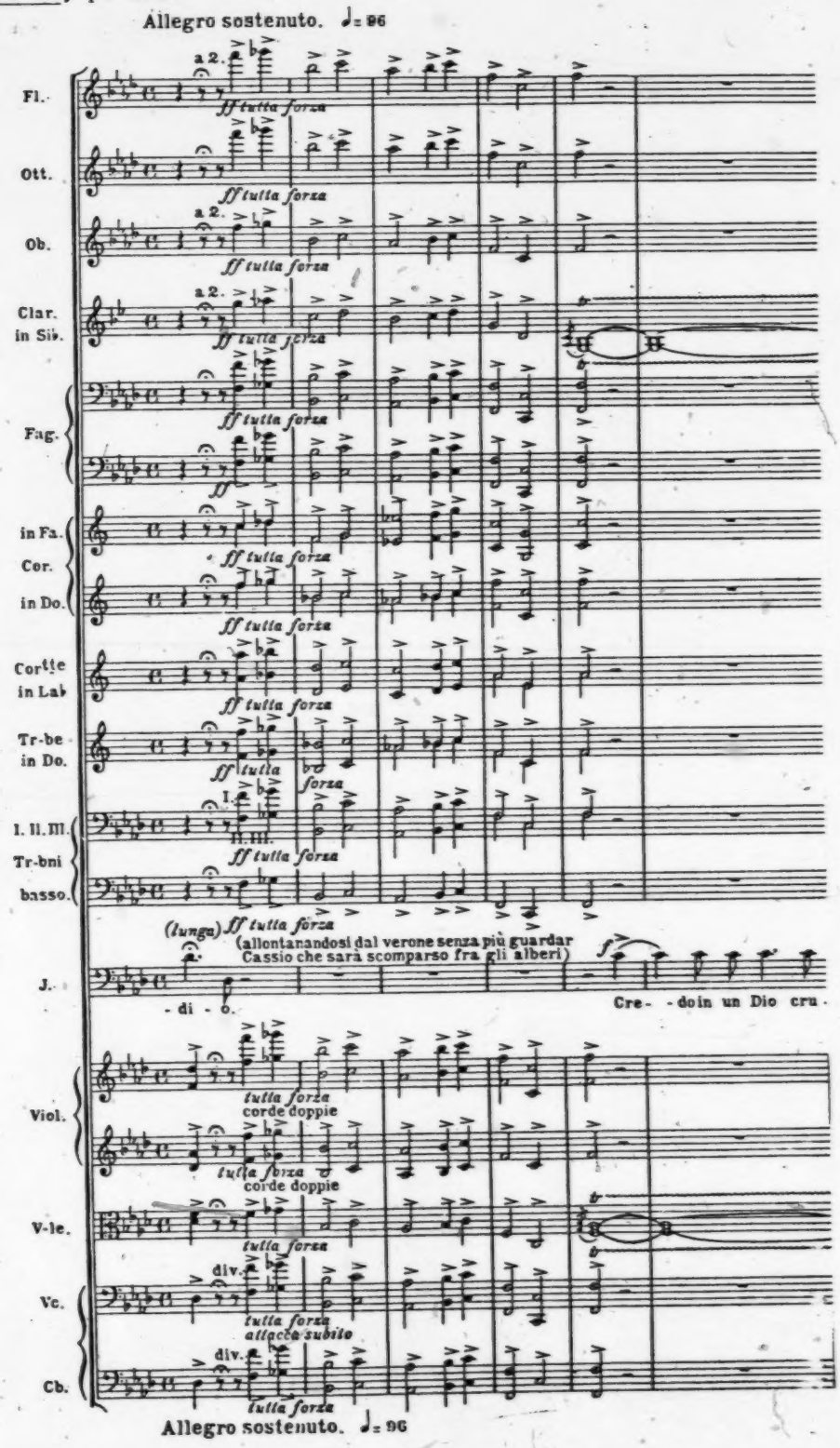
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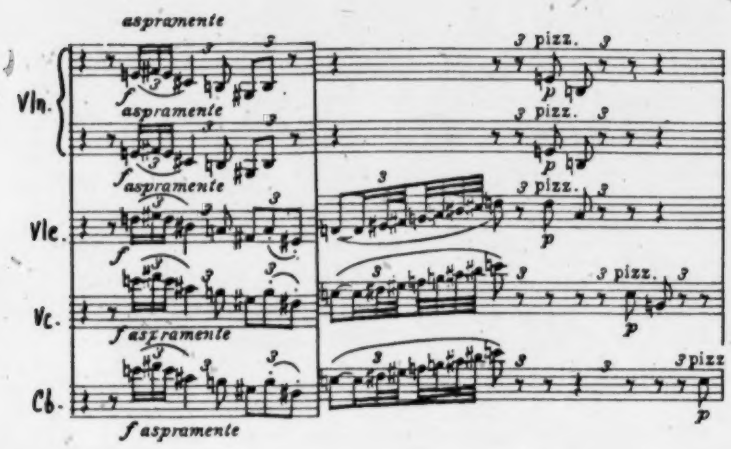
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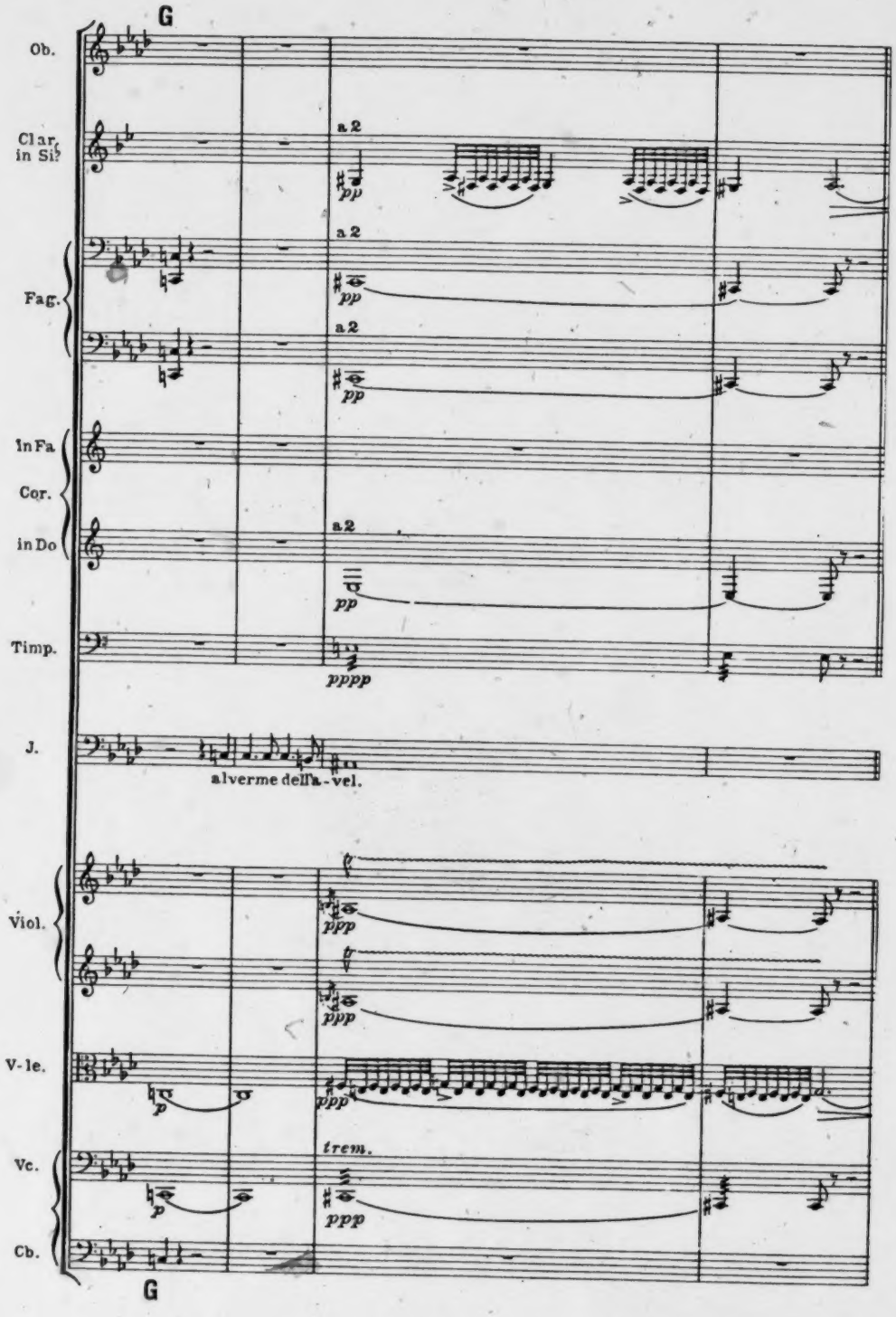
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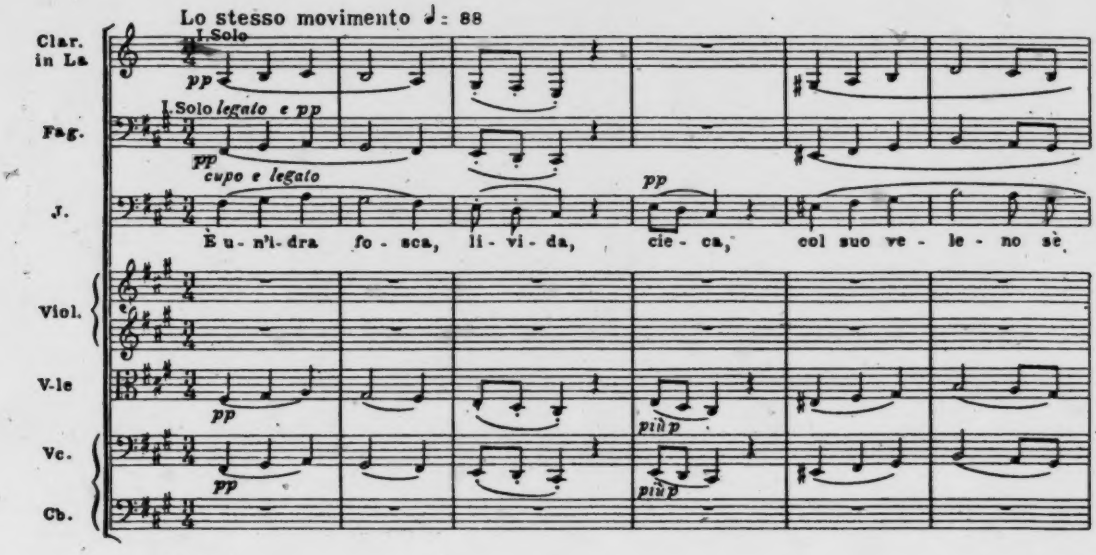
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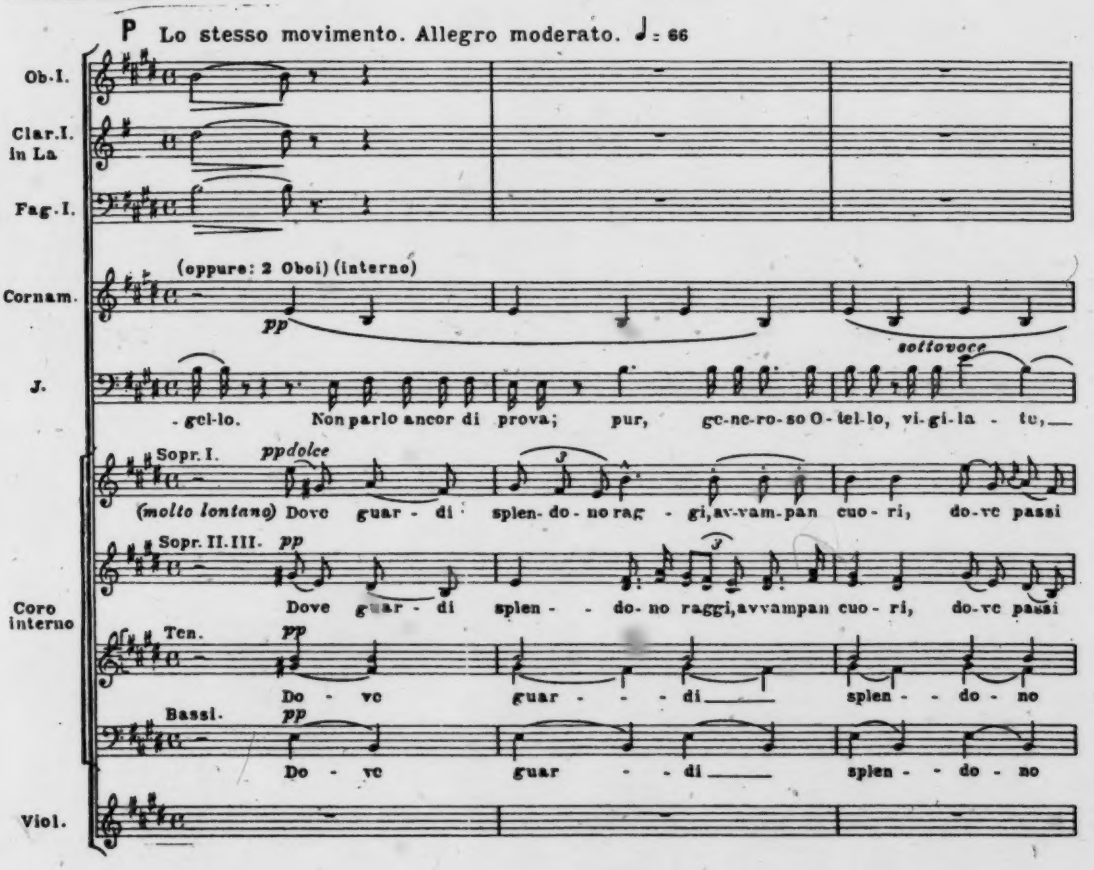
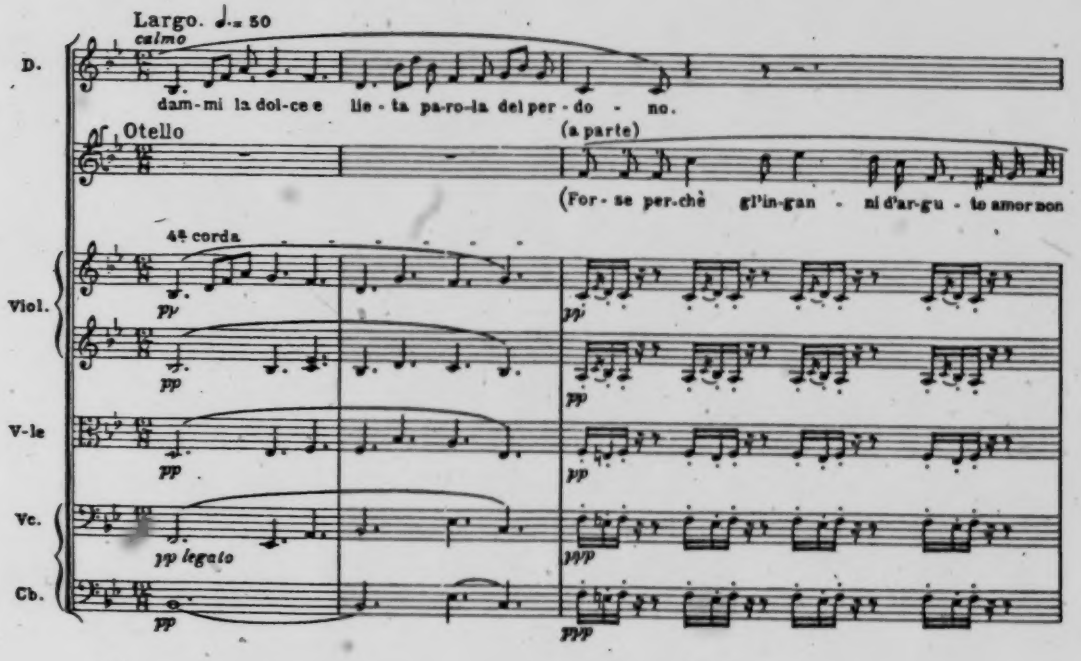

P Lo stesso movimento. Allegro moderato. ♩= 66
Ob.I.
Clar.I. in La
Fag.I.
(oppure: 2 Oboi) (interno)
Cornam.
pp
sottovoce
J.
-gel-lo. Non parlo ancor di prova; pur, ge-ne-ro-so O-tel-lo, vi-gi-la - tu,
Sopr. I.
ppdolce
(molto lontano) Dove guar - di splen-do-no rag - gi, av-vam-pan cuo-ri, do-ve passi
Sopr. II. III.
pp
Dove guar - di splen - - do-no raggi, avvampan cuo-ri, do-ve passi
Coro interno
Ten.
pp
Do - ve guar - - - di splen - - do - no
Bassi.
pp
Do - ve guar - - di splen - - do - no
Viol.

Example 30, p. 235.

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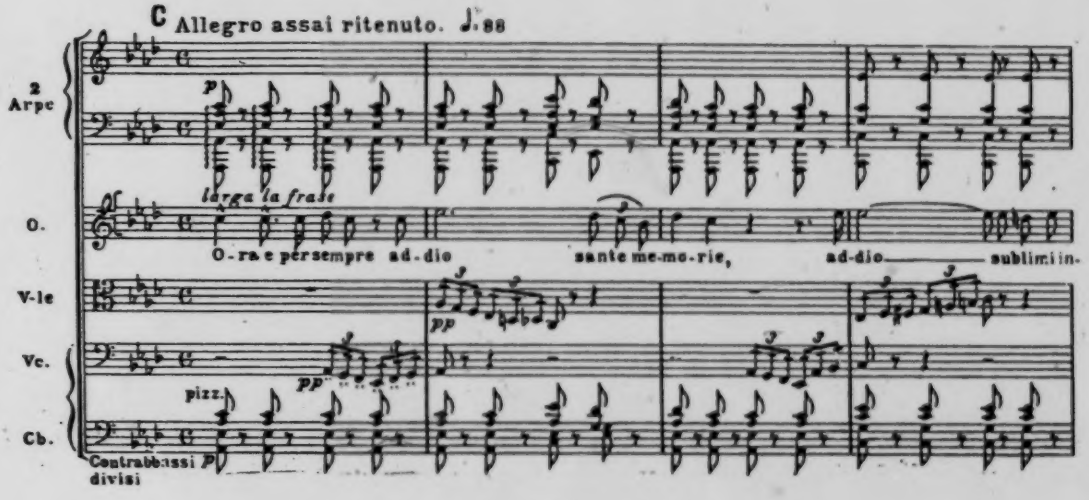
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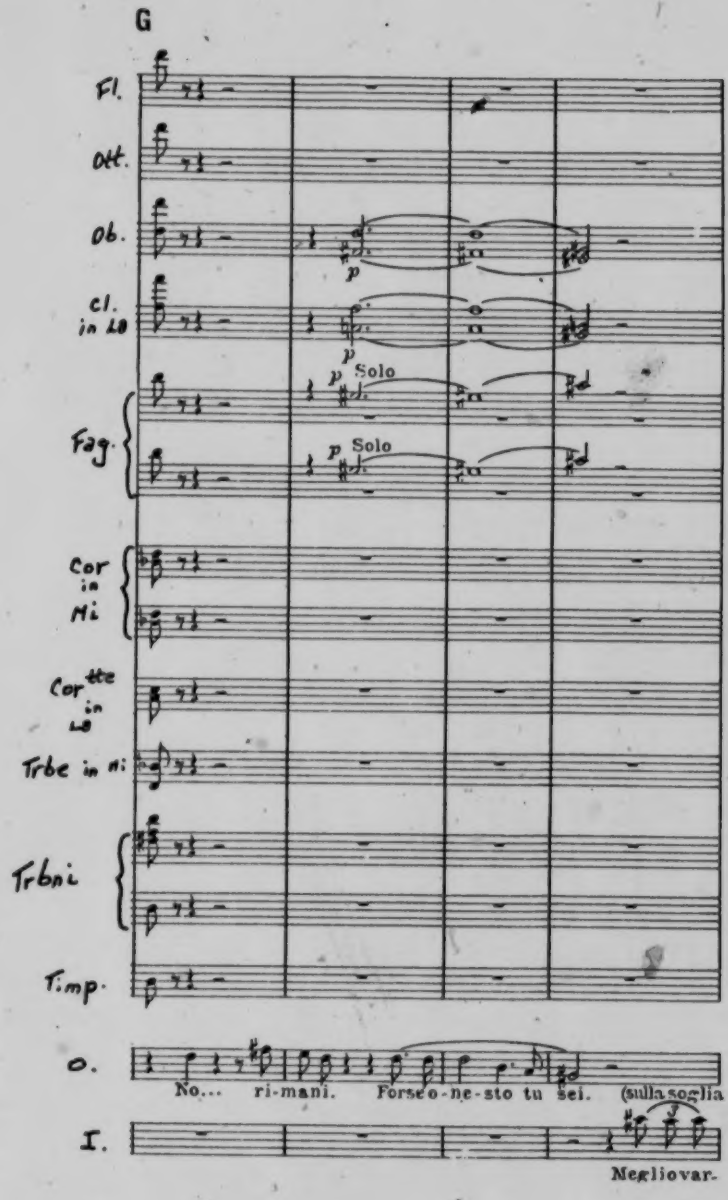
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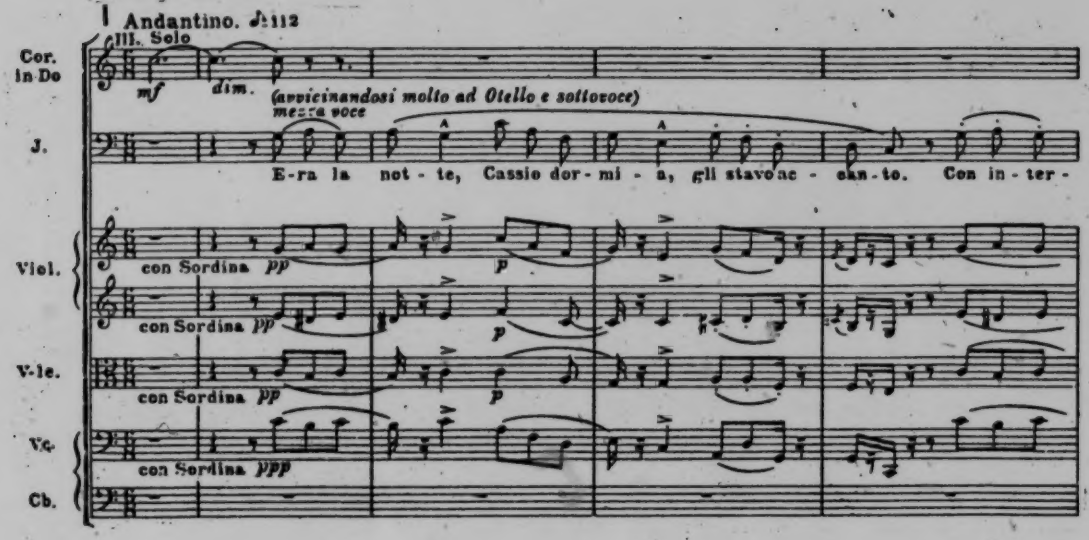
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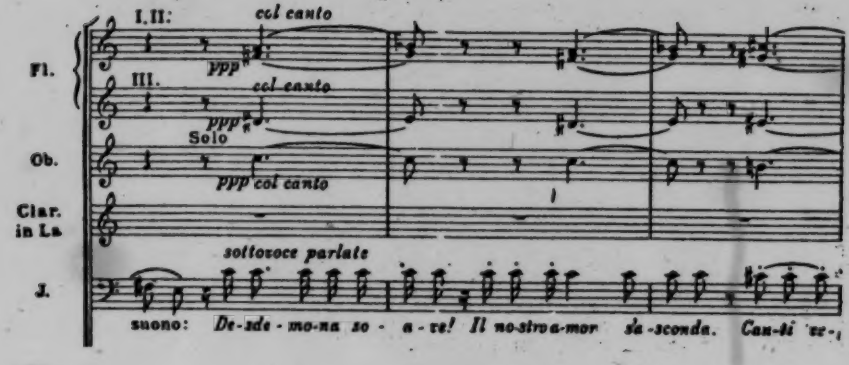
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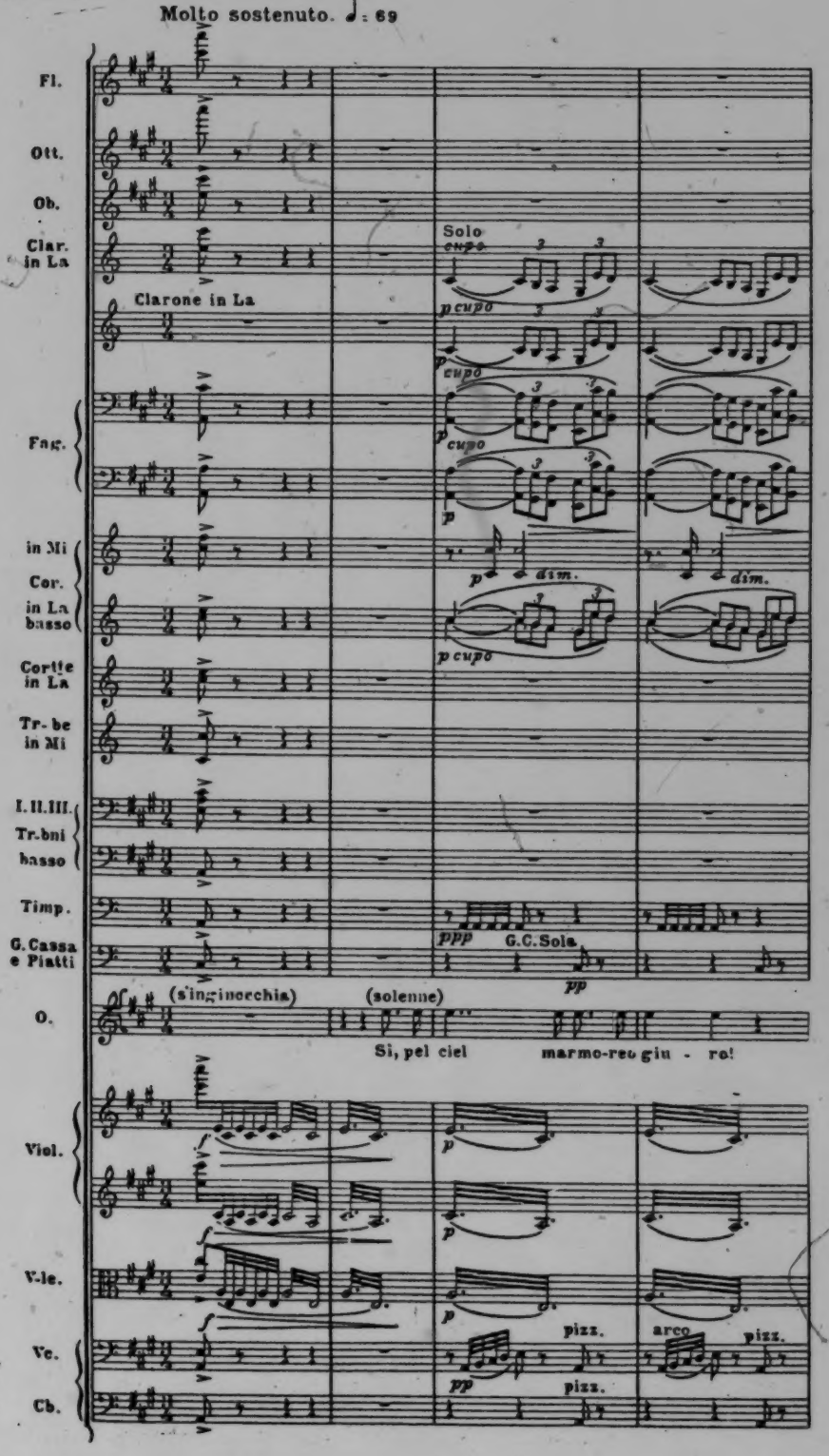

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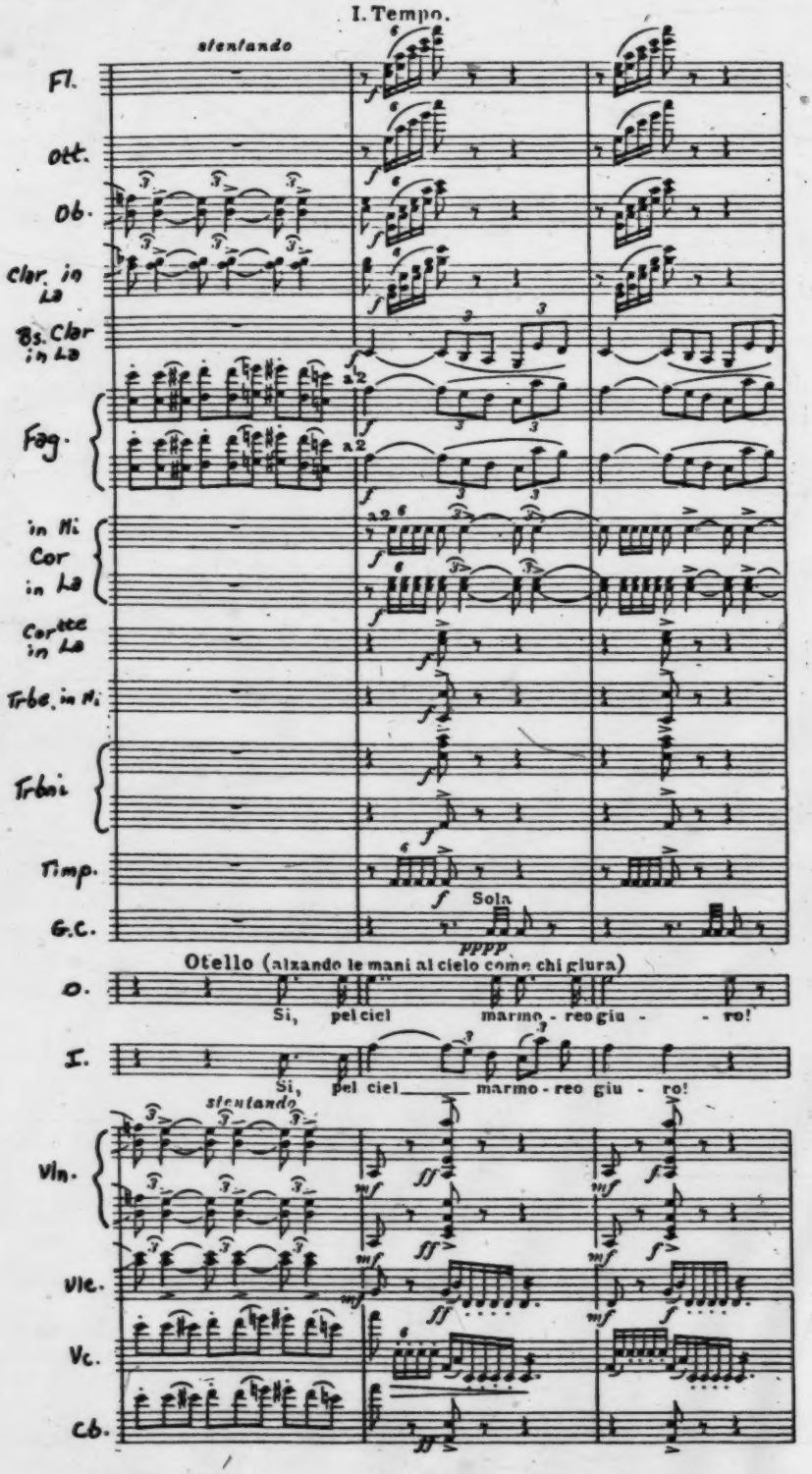
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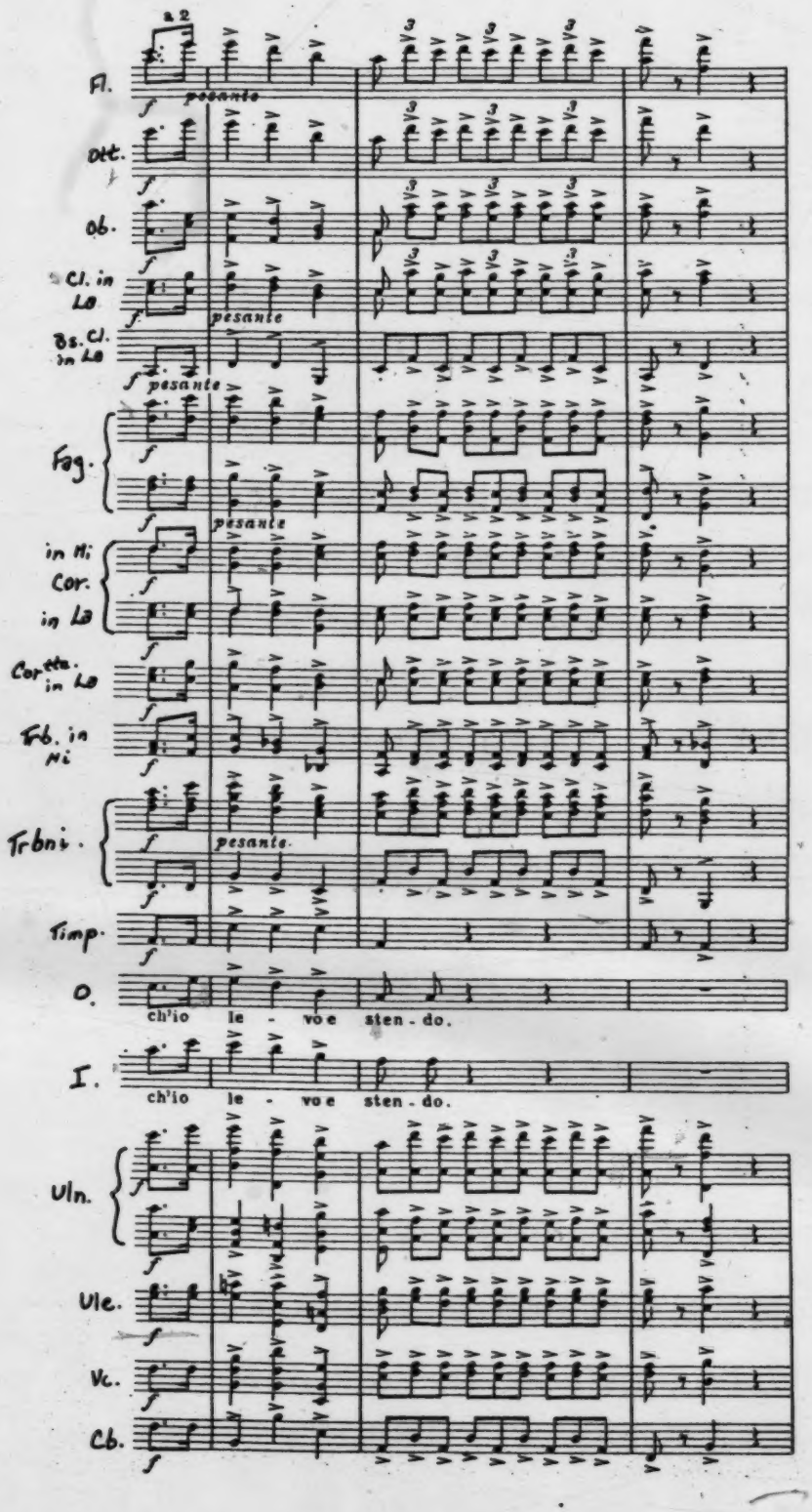
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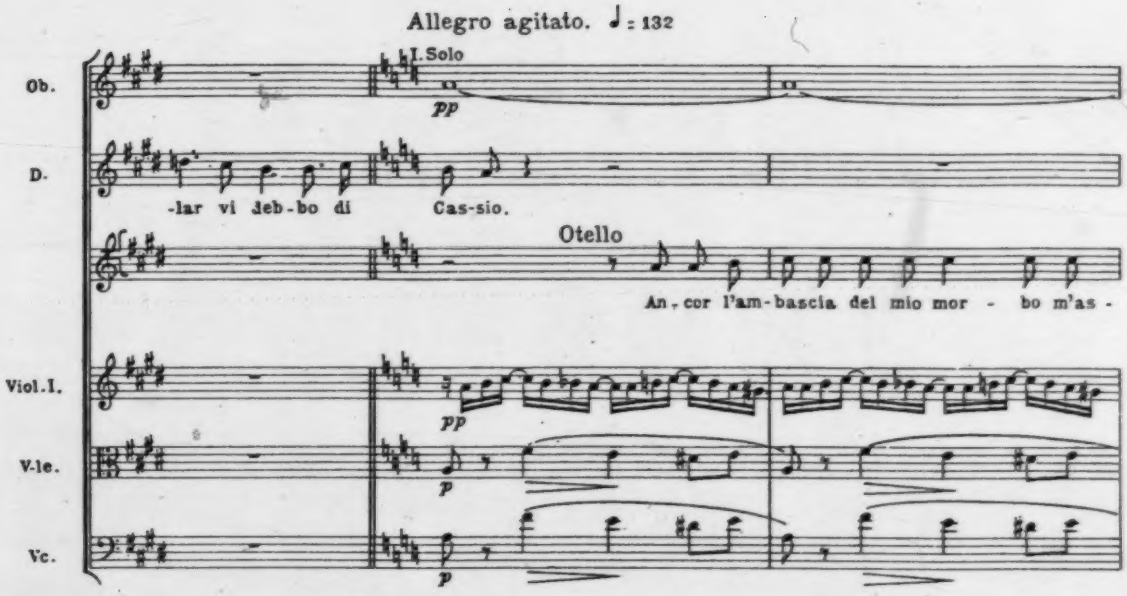
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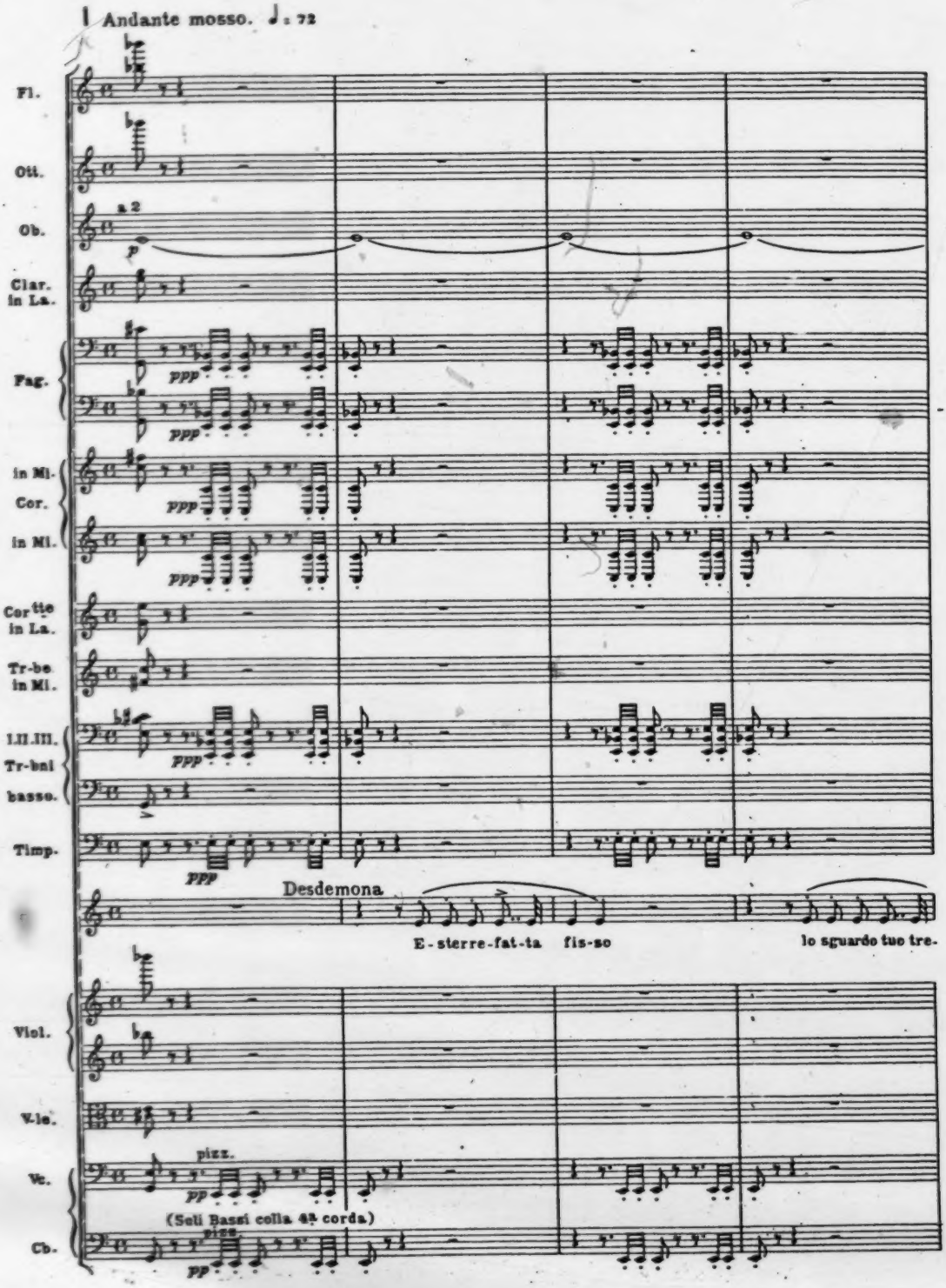
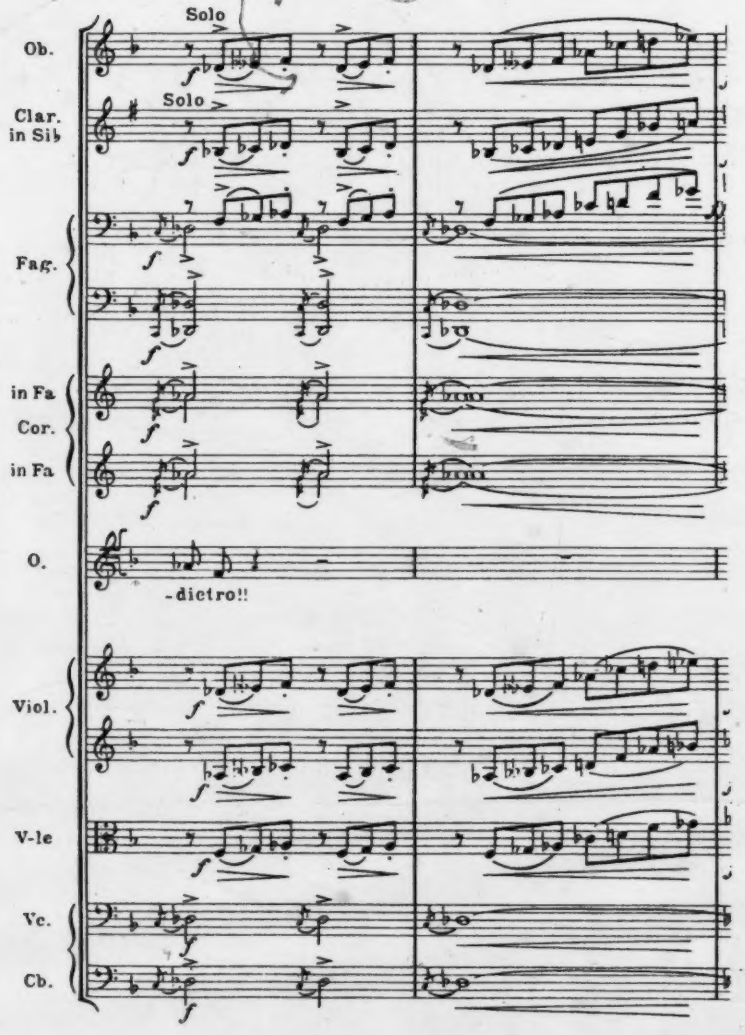

Example 40, p. 334.

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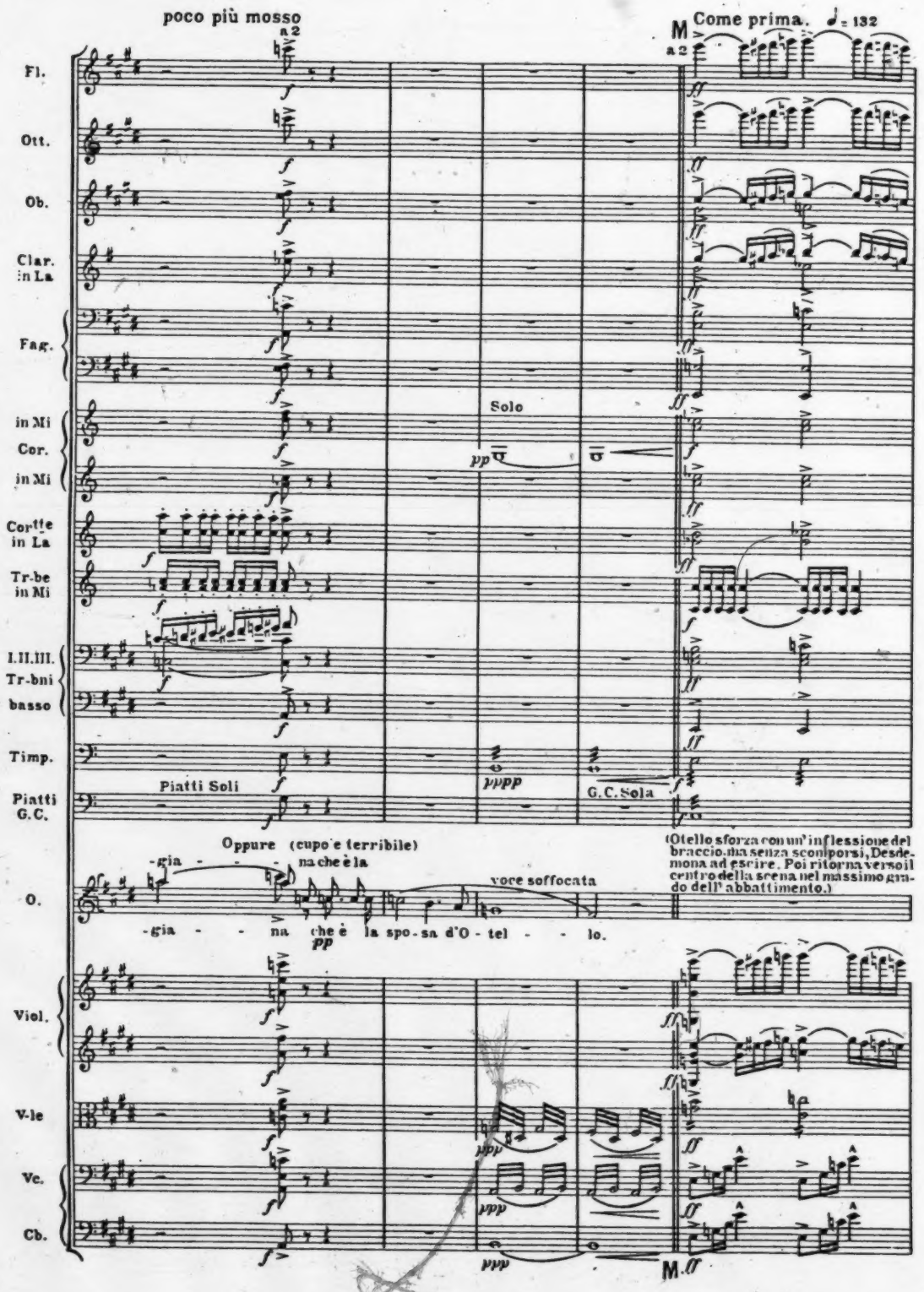
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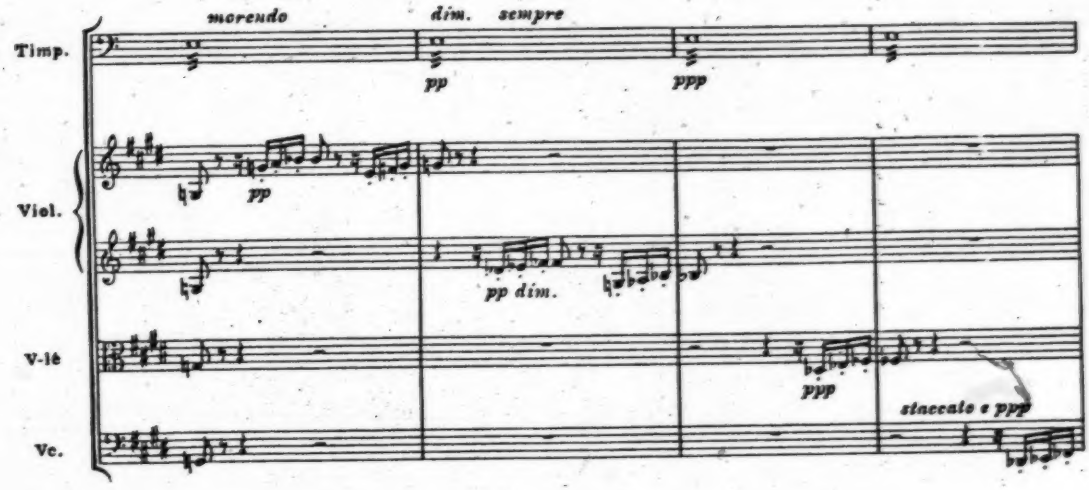
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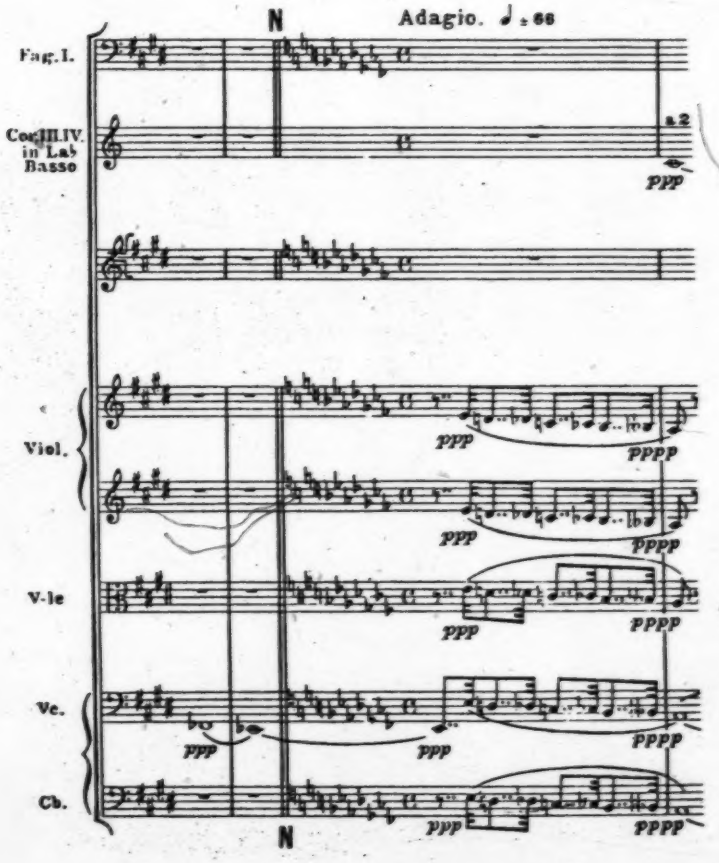

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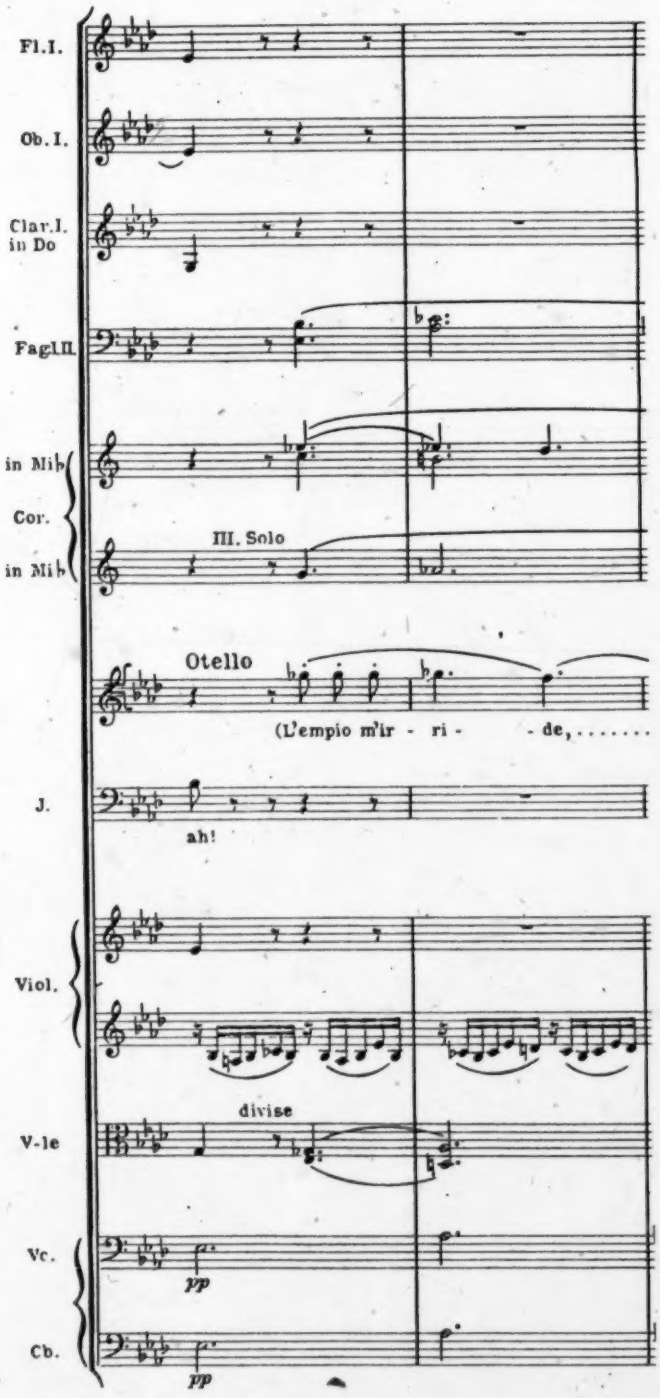
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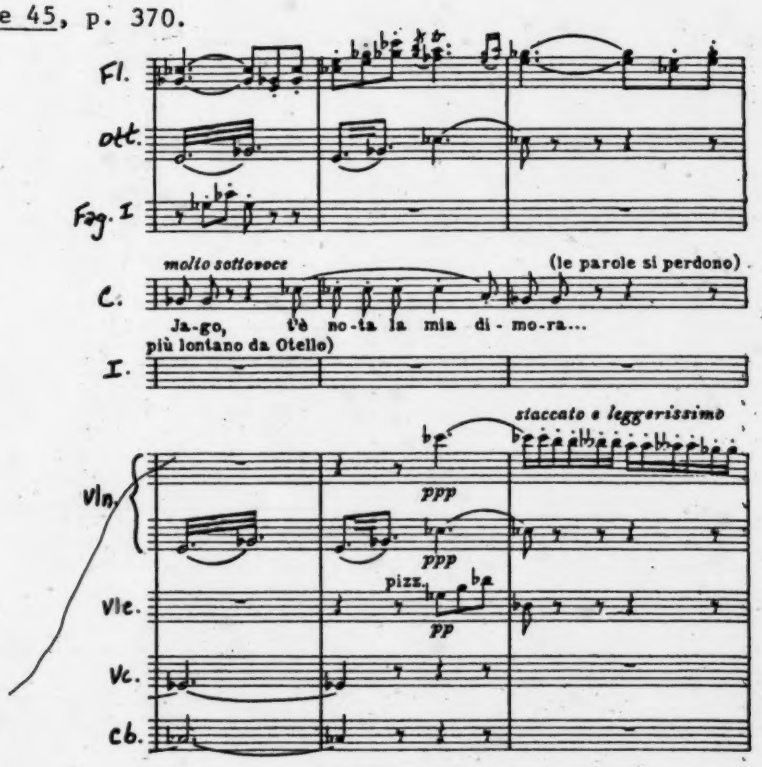
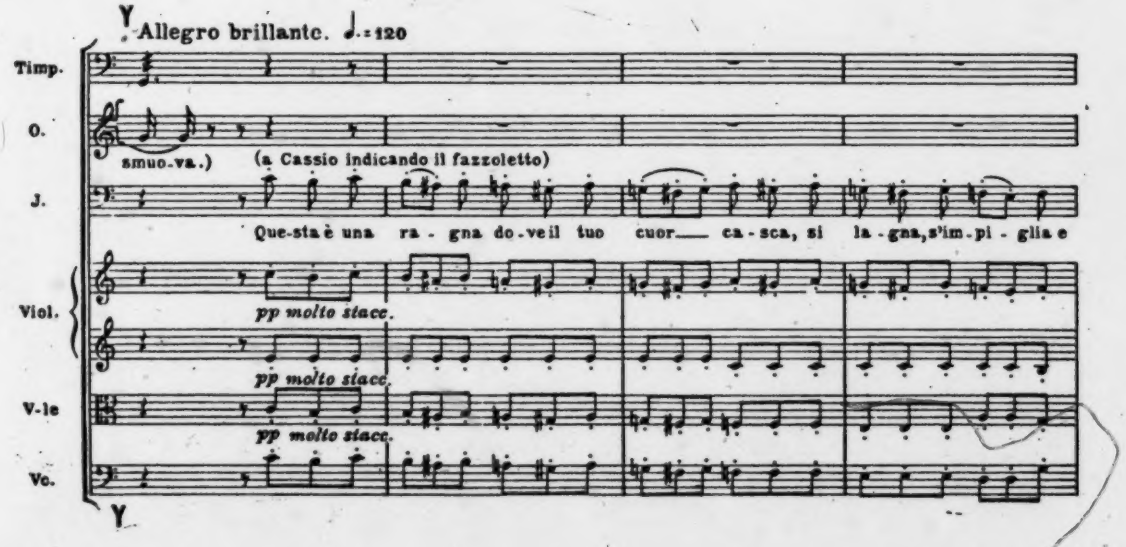

Example 46, p. 378.



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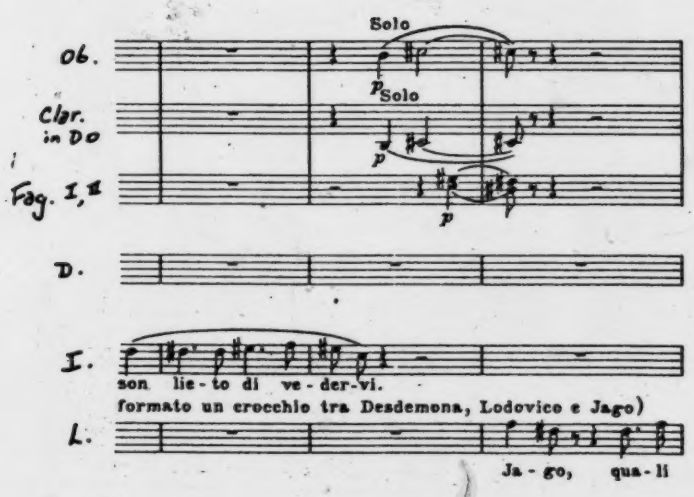
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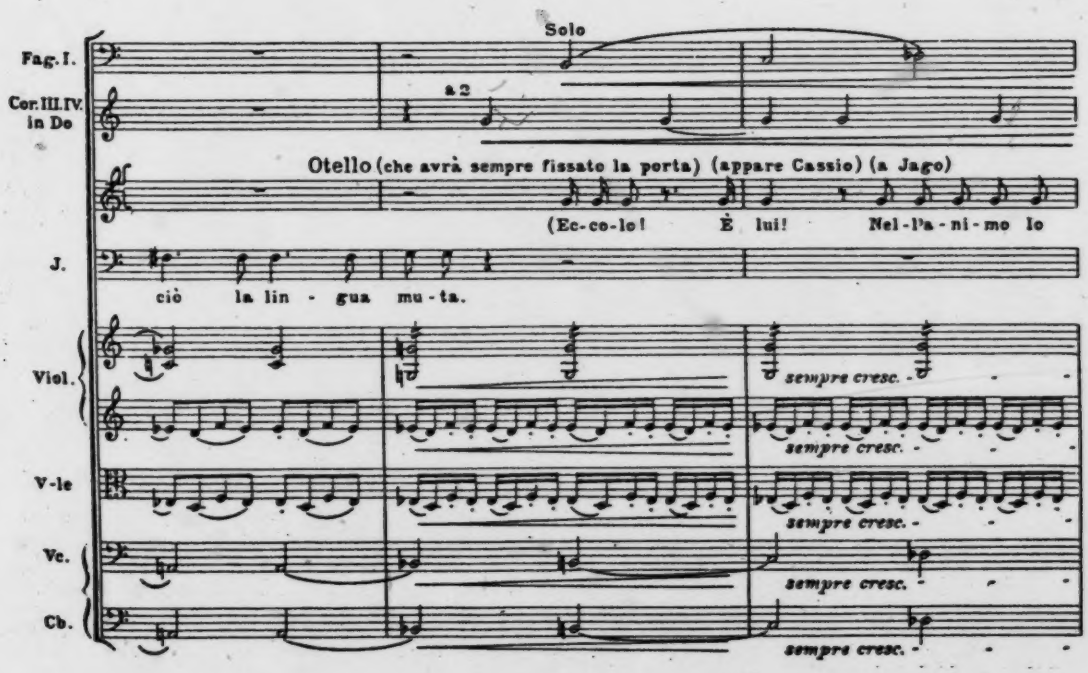
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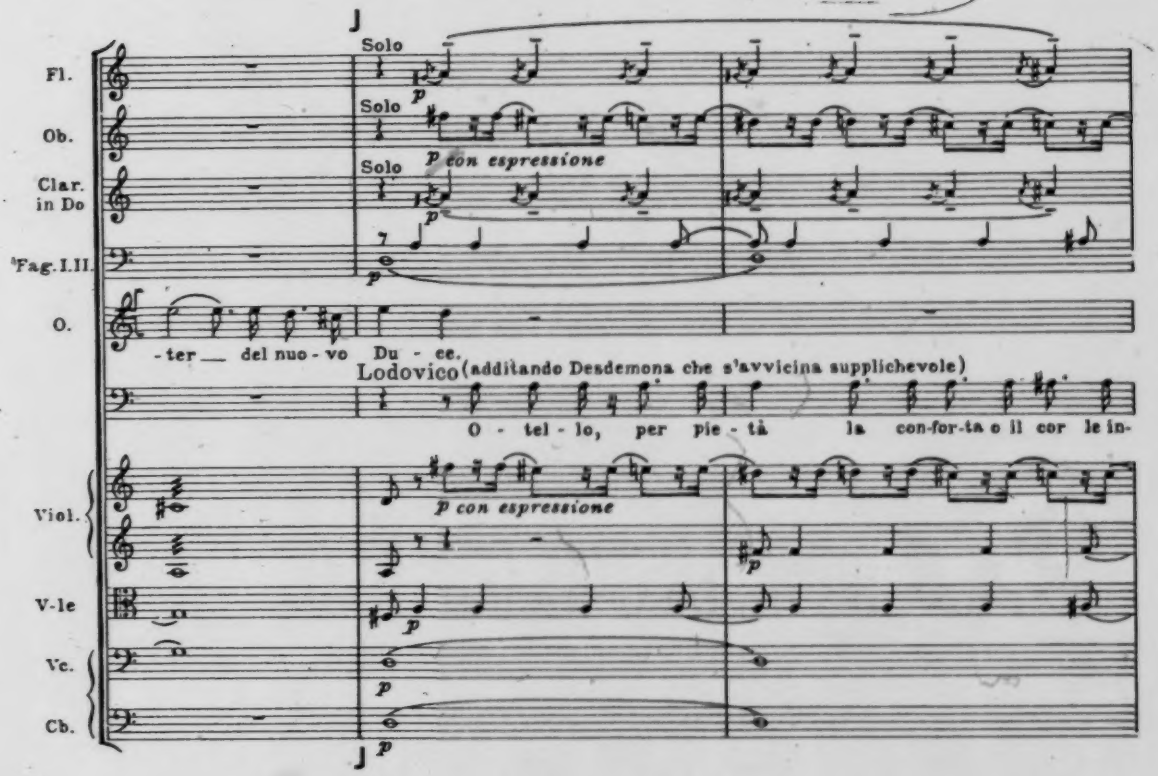
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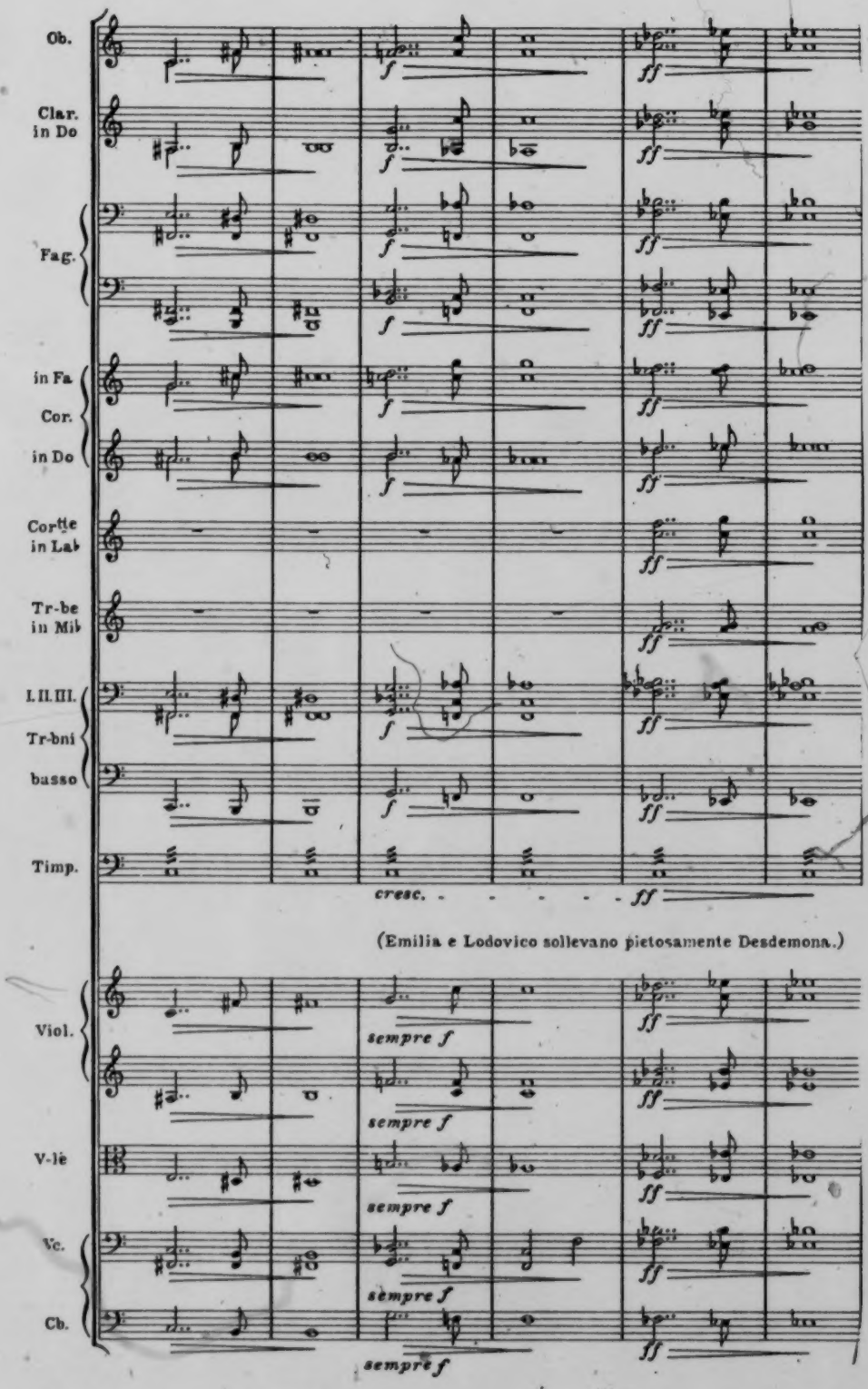
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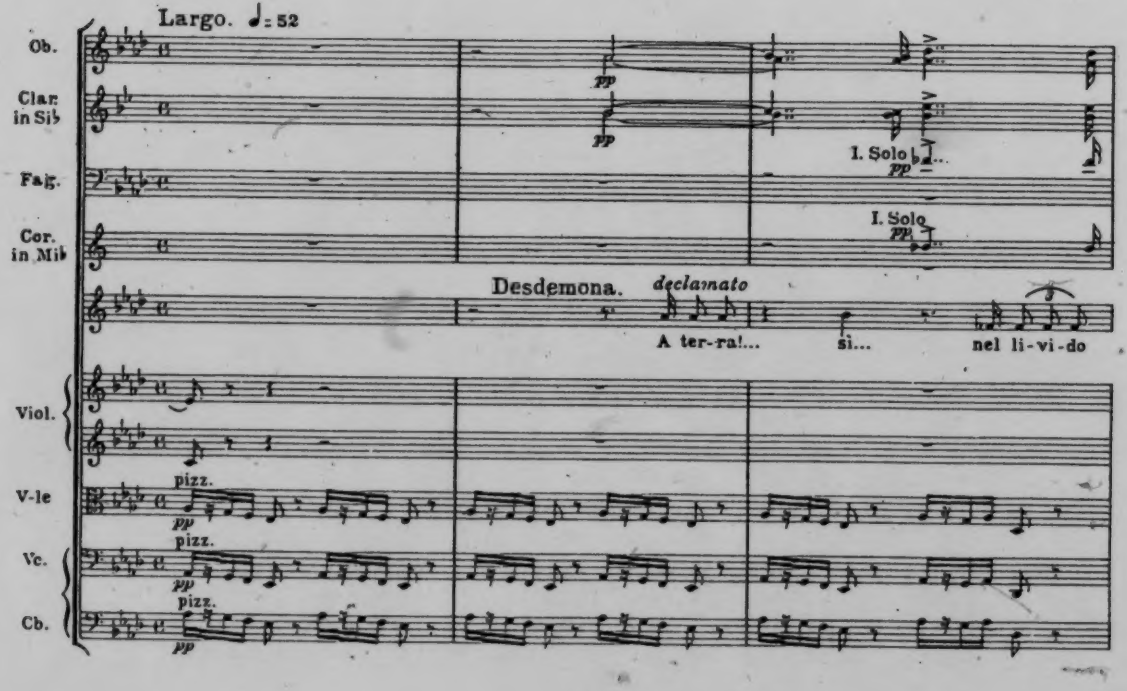

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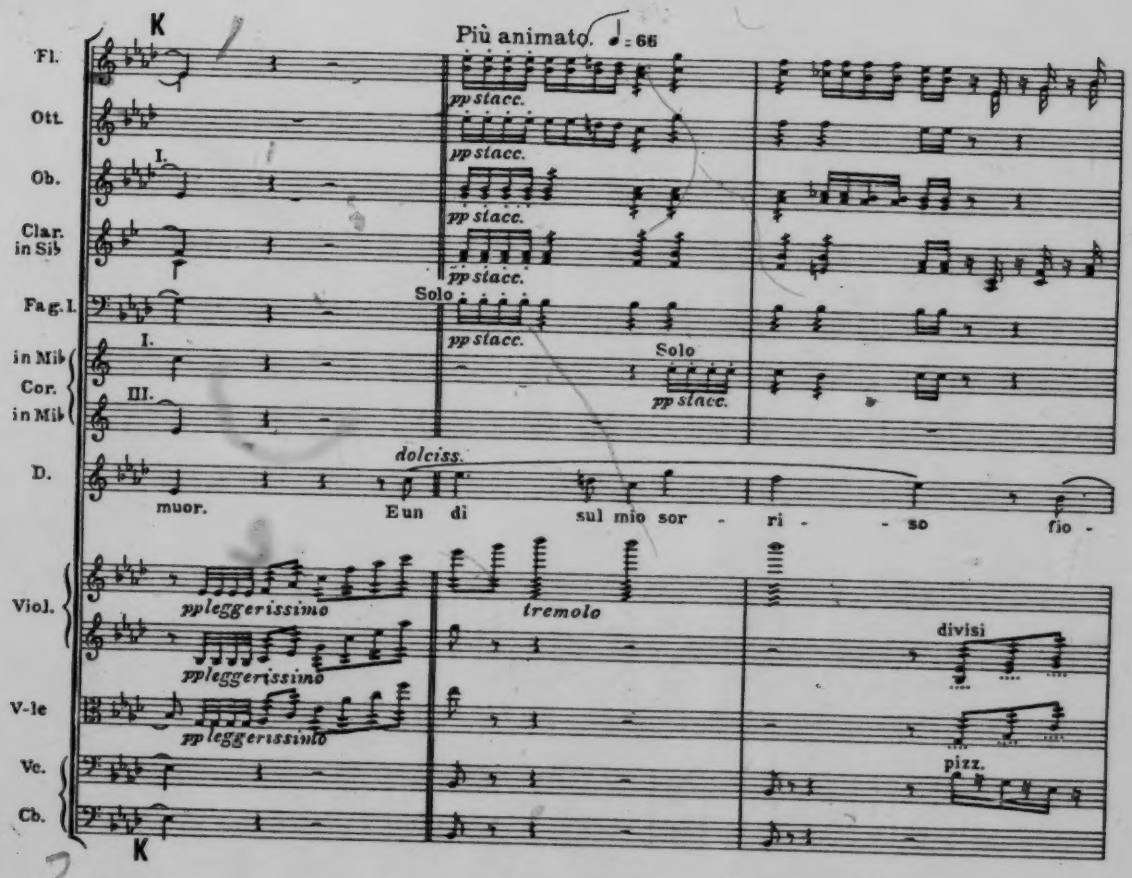
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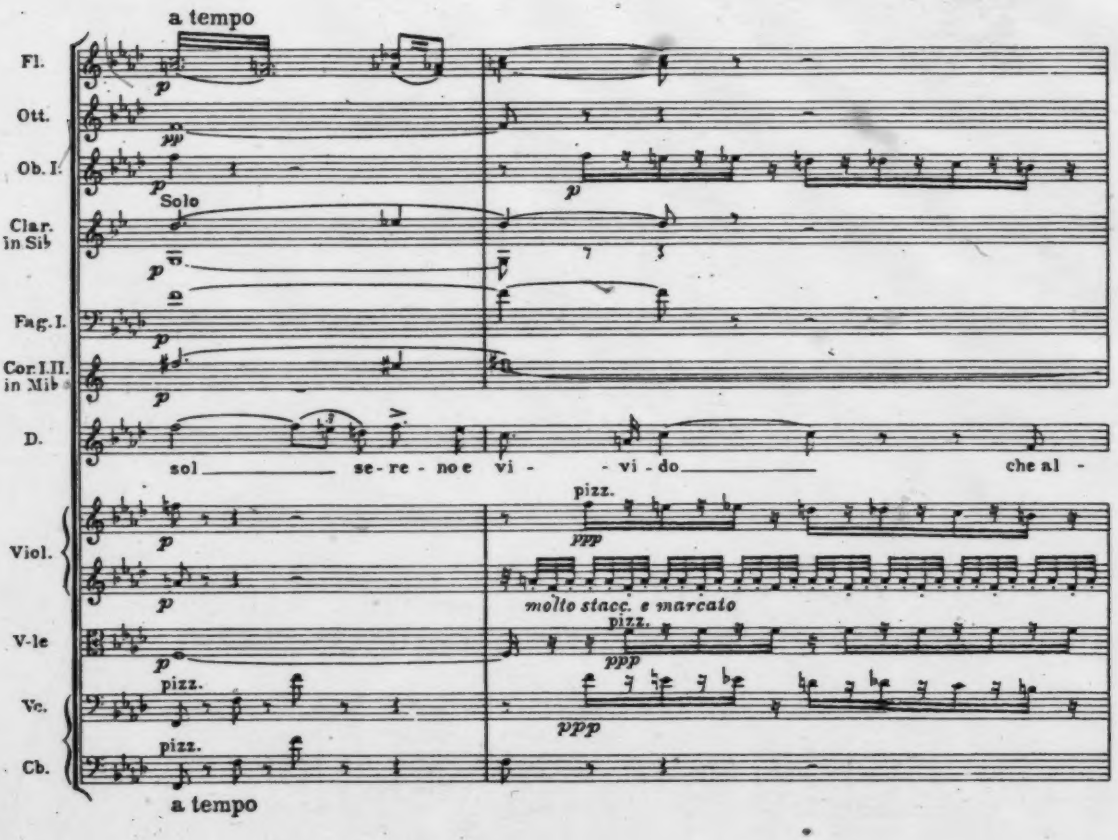
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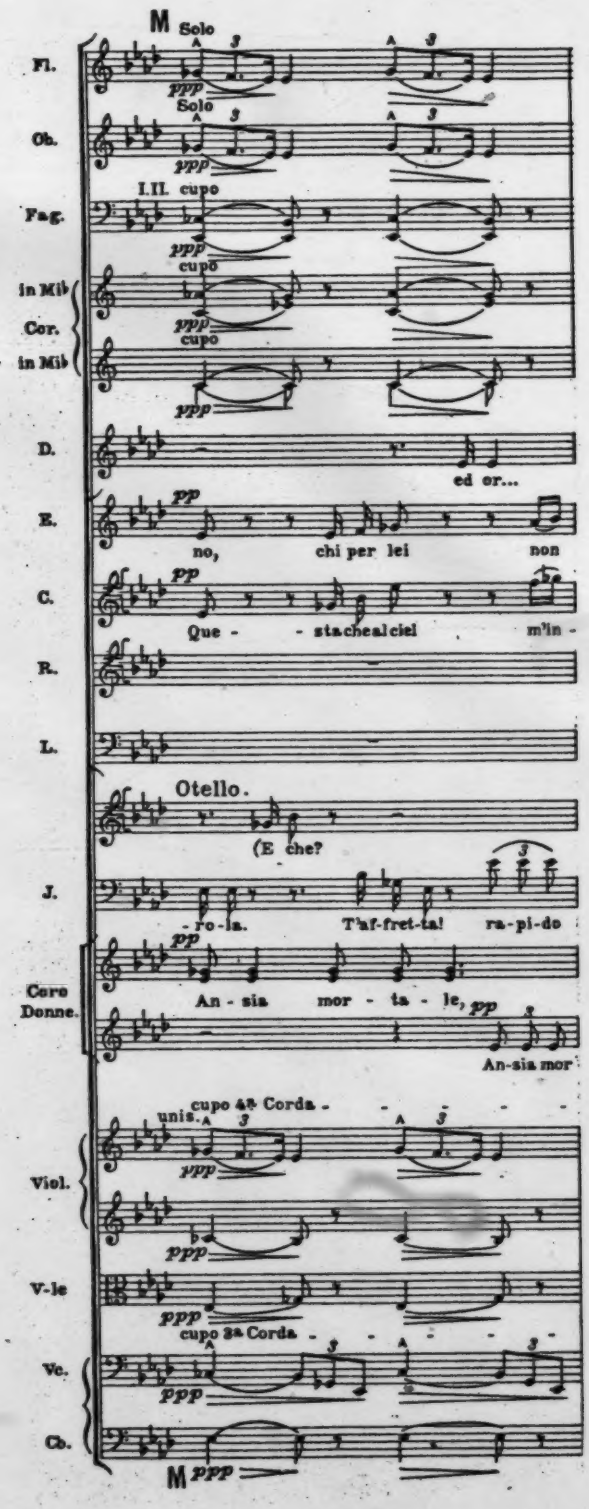
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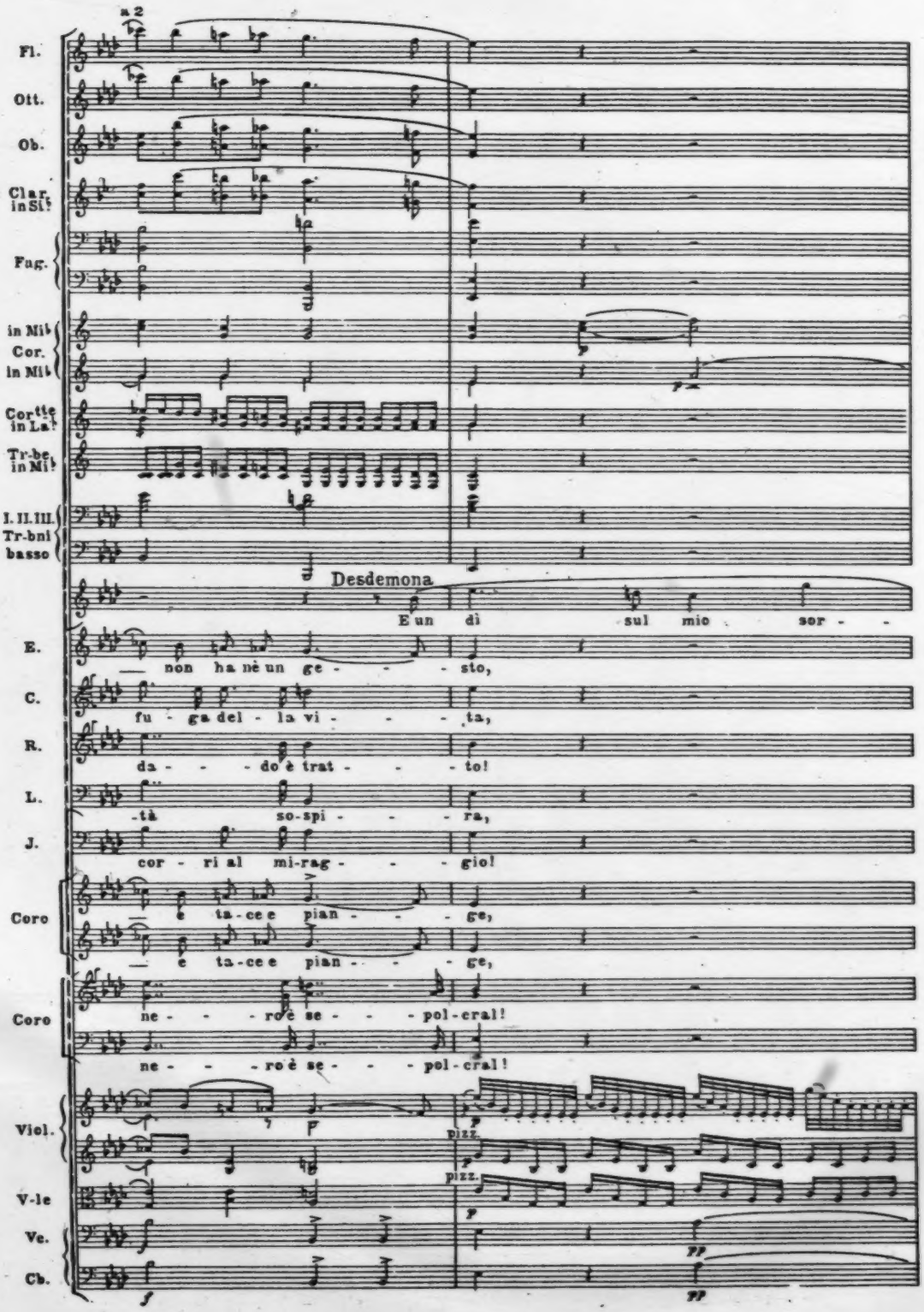
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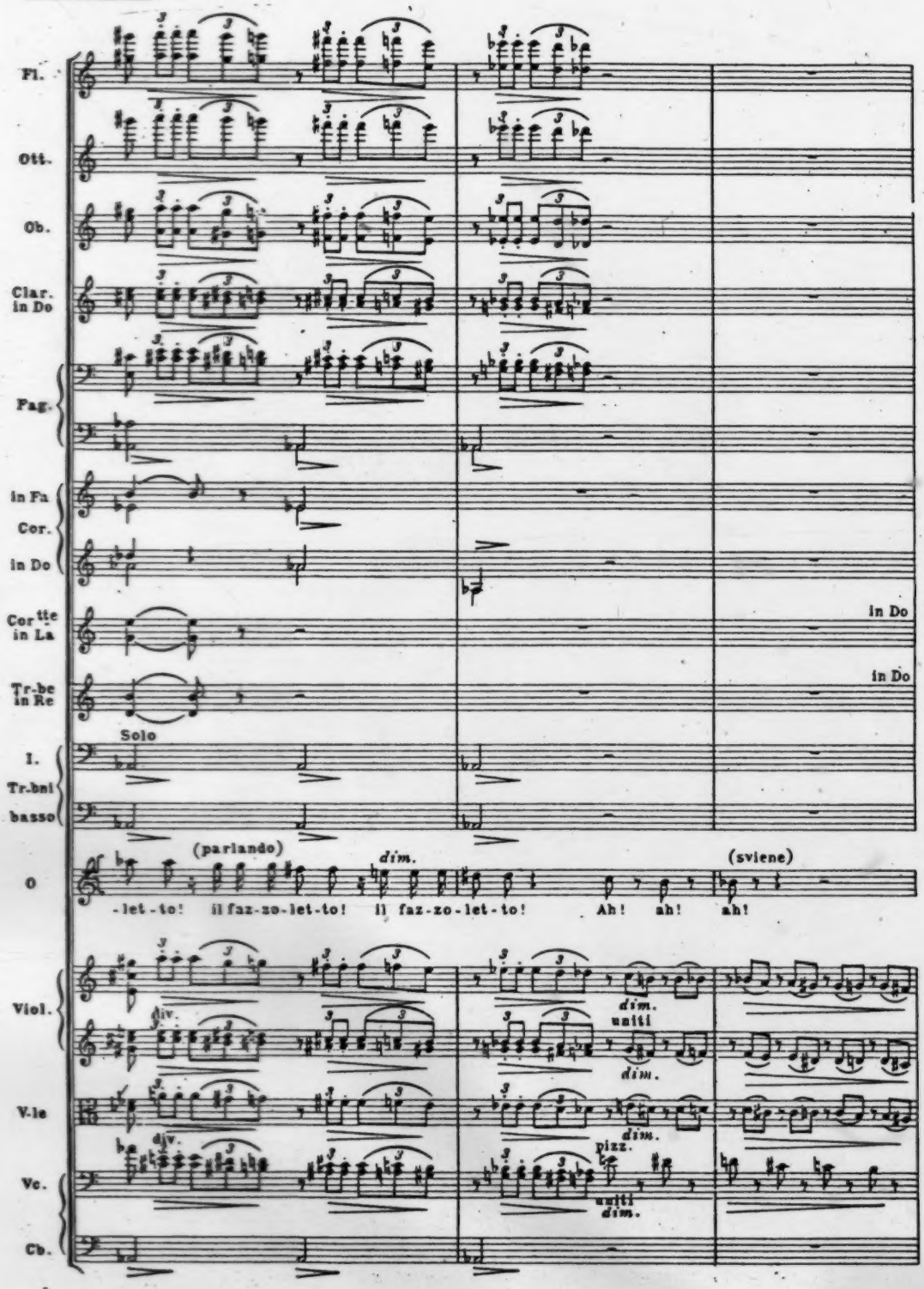
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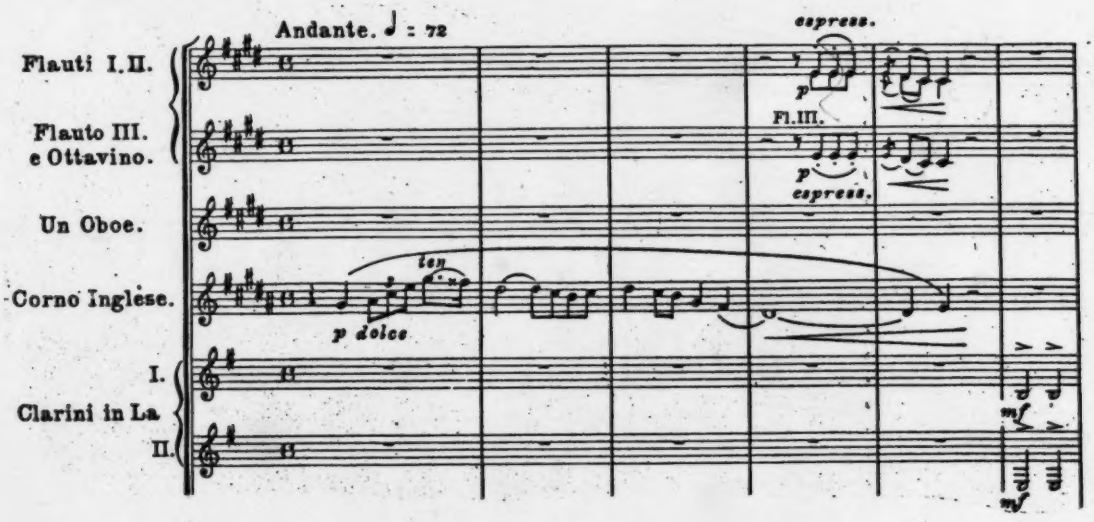
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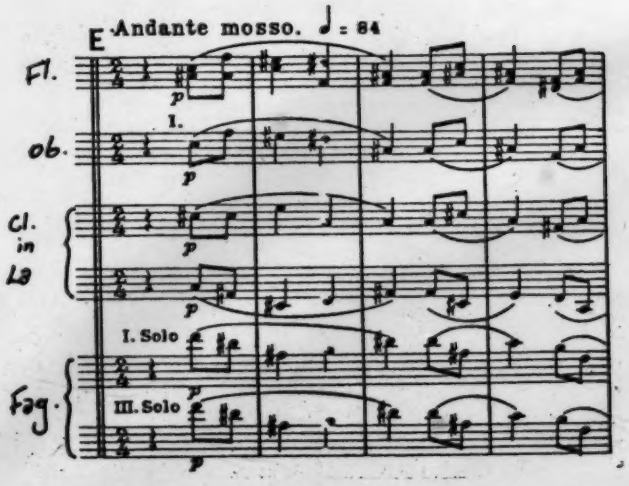
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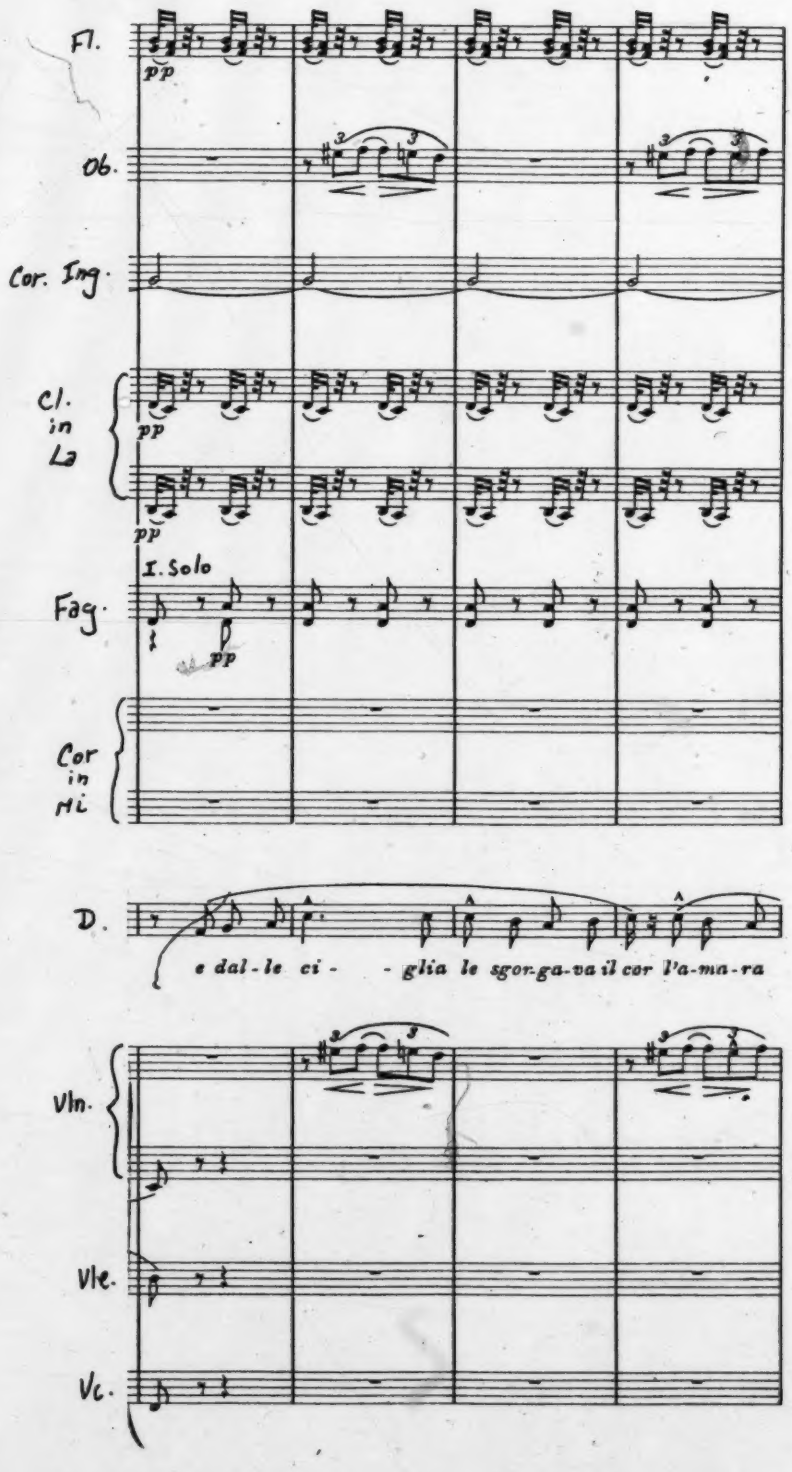
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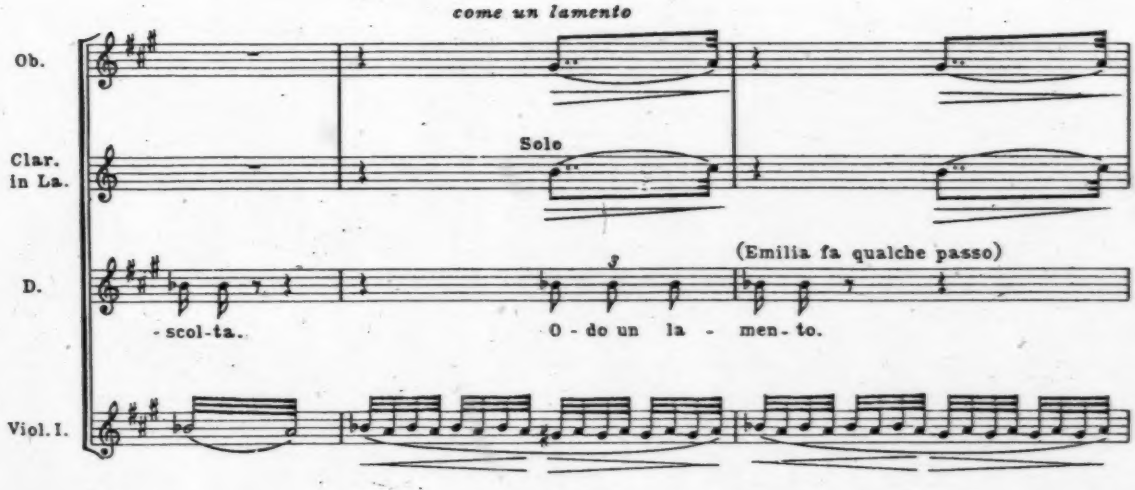
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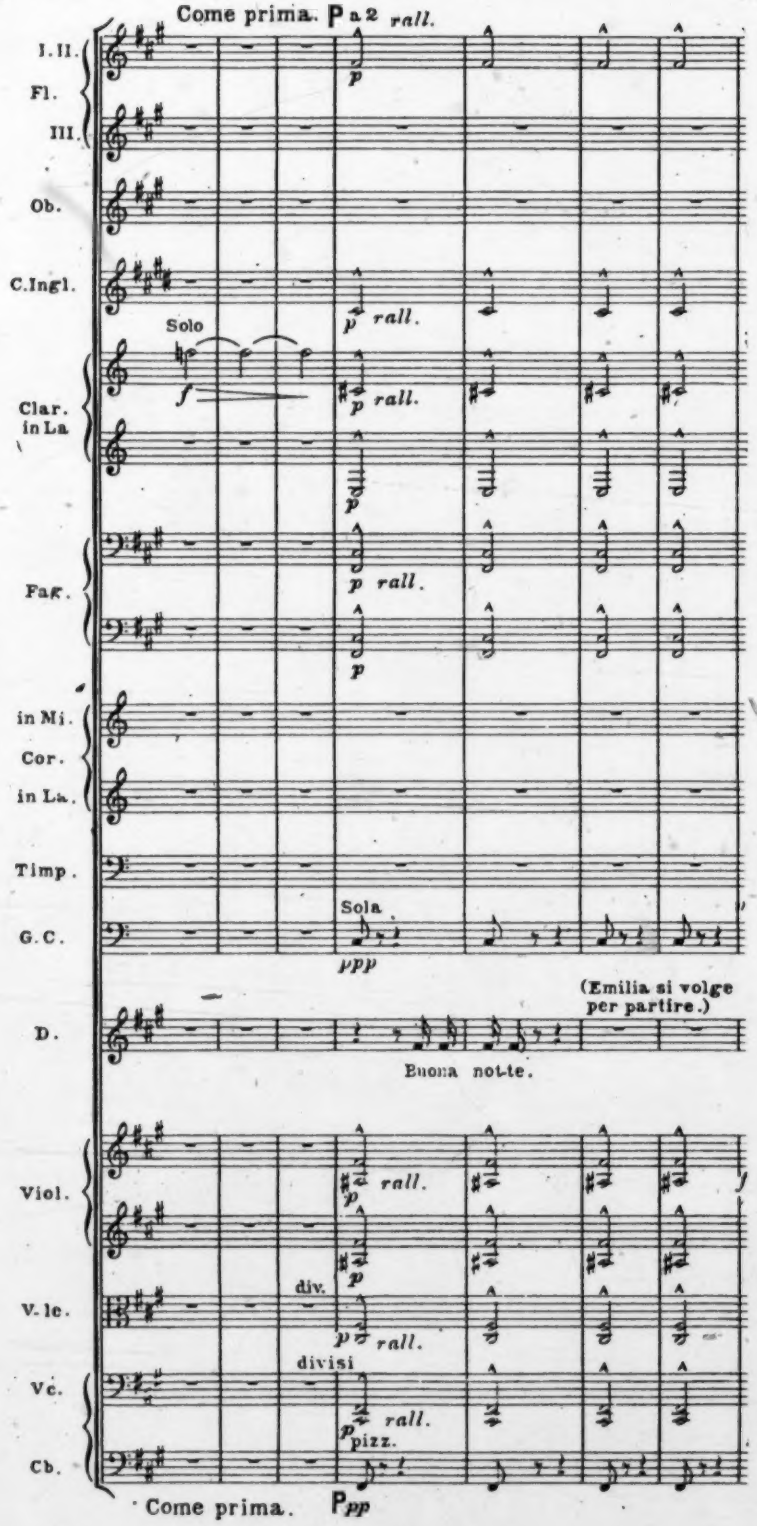
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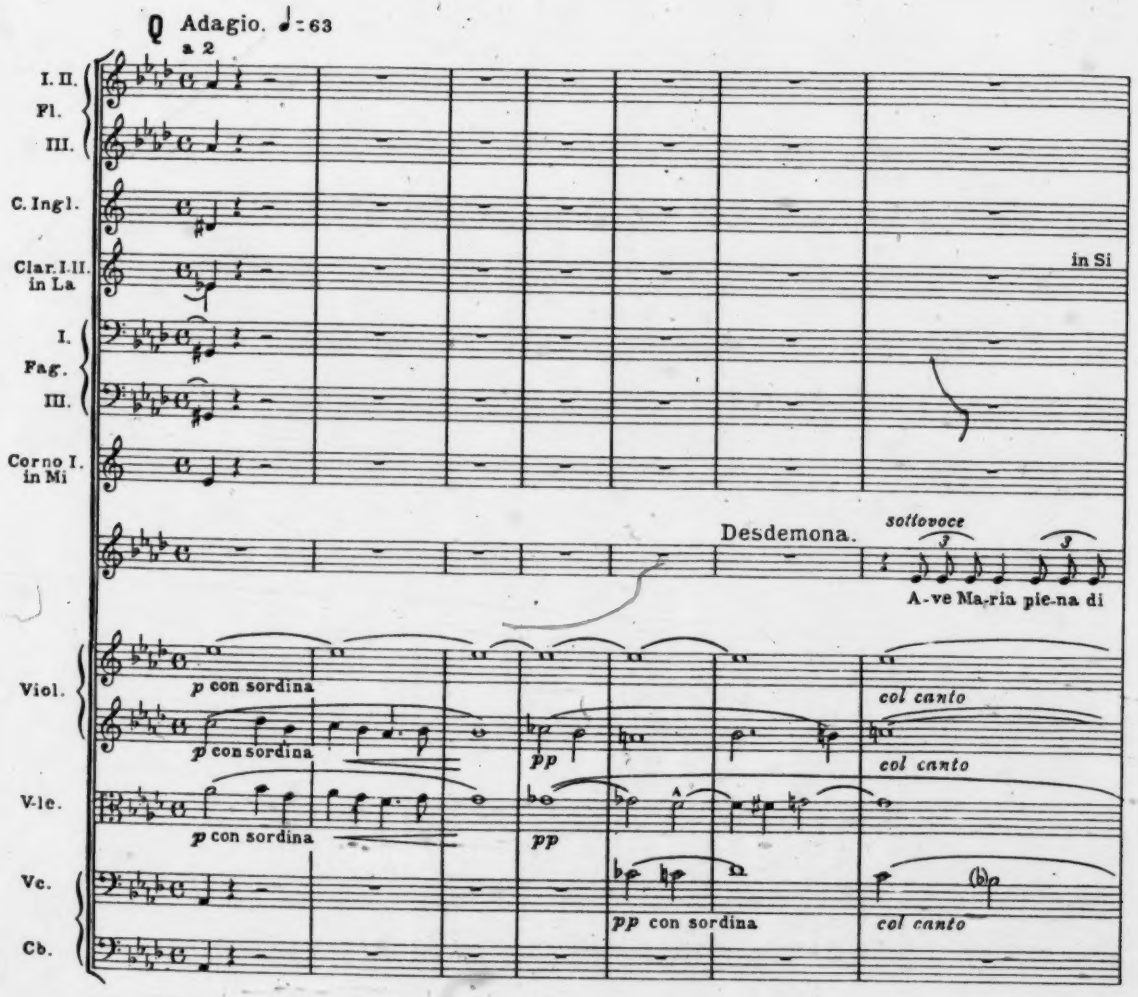
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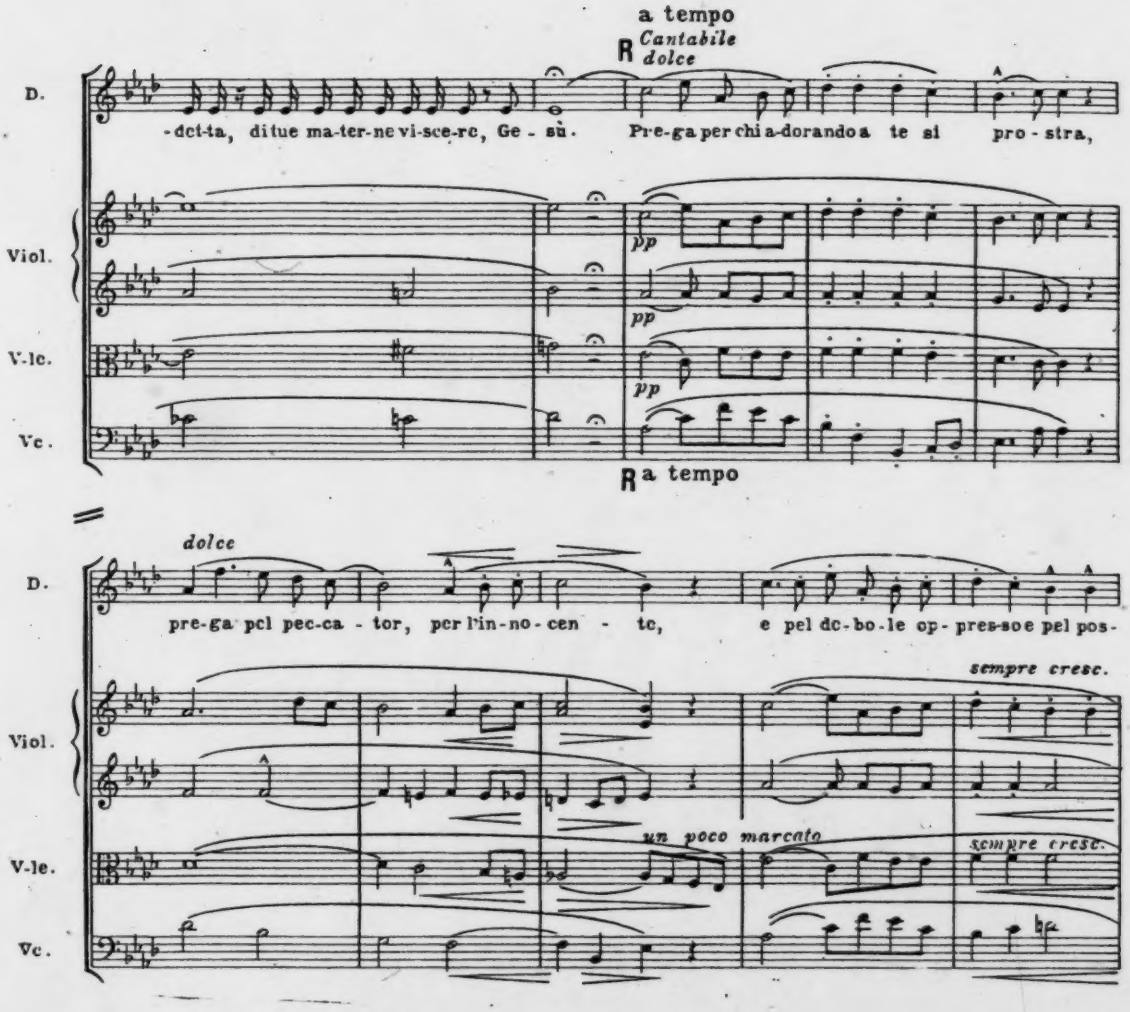
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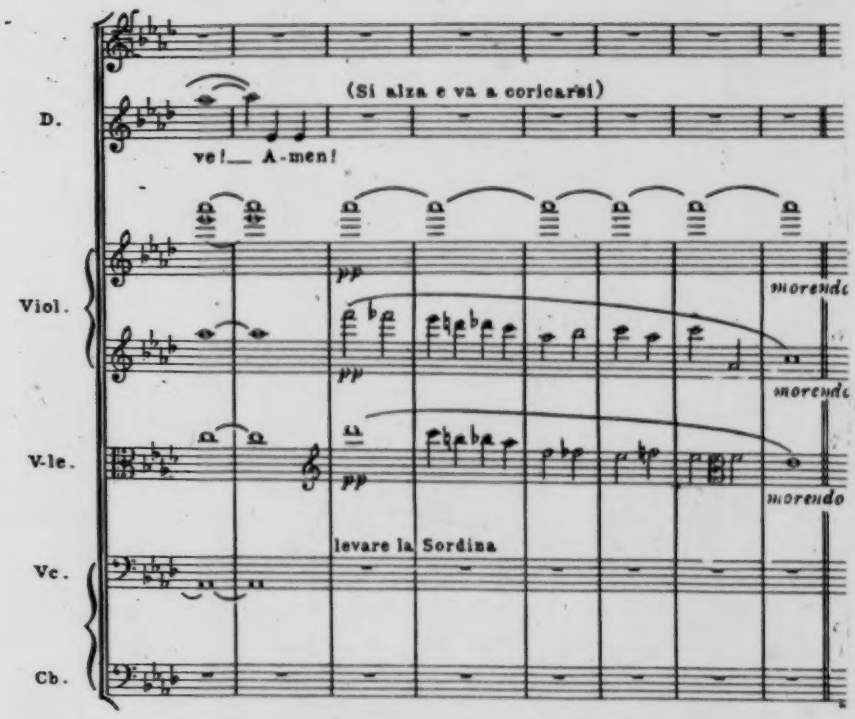
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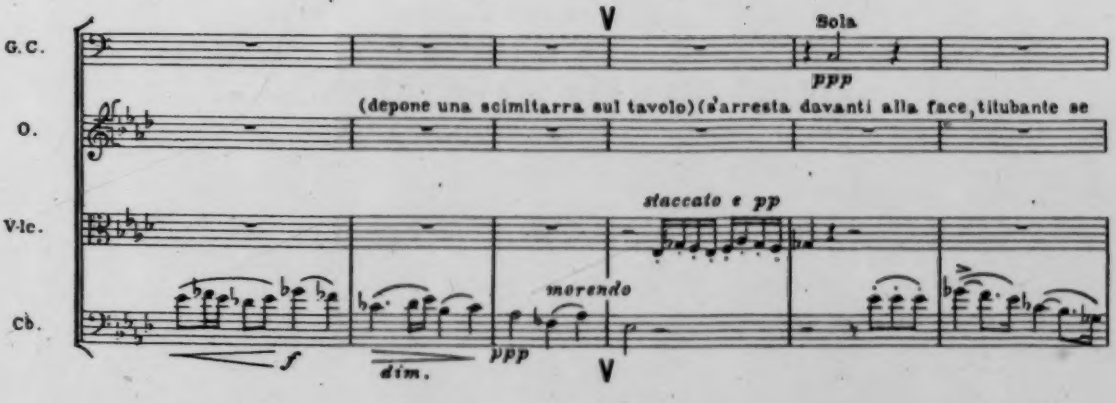
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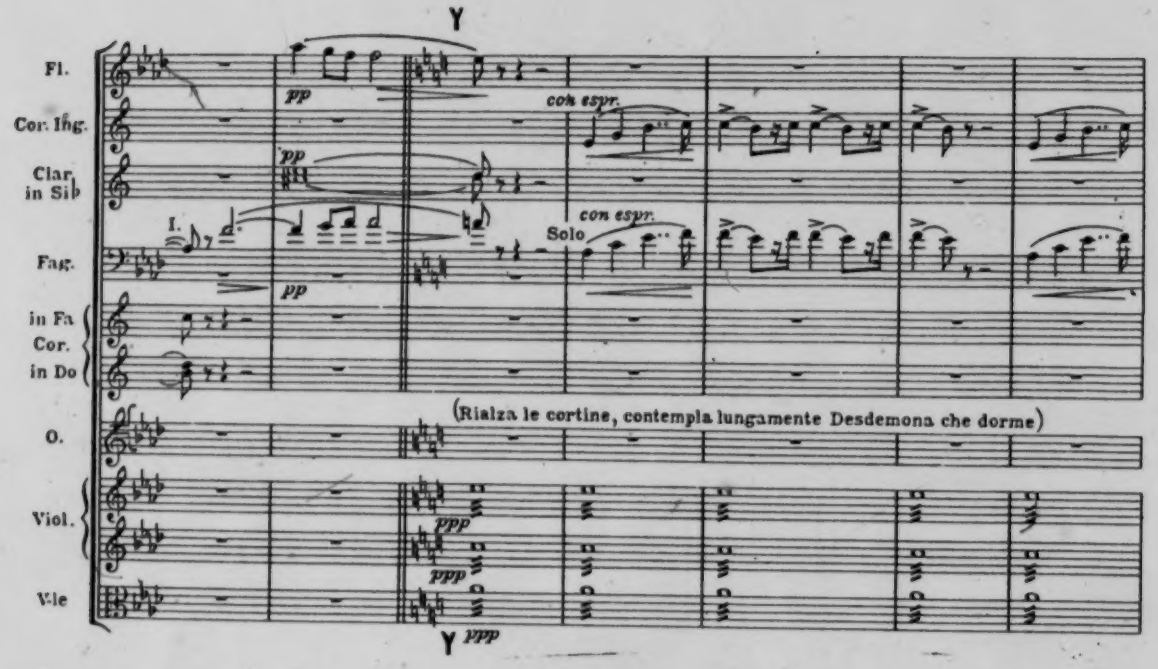
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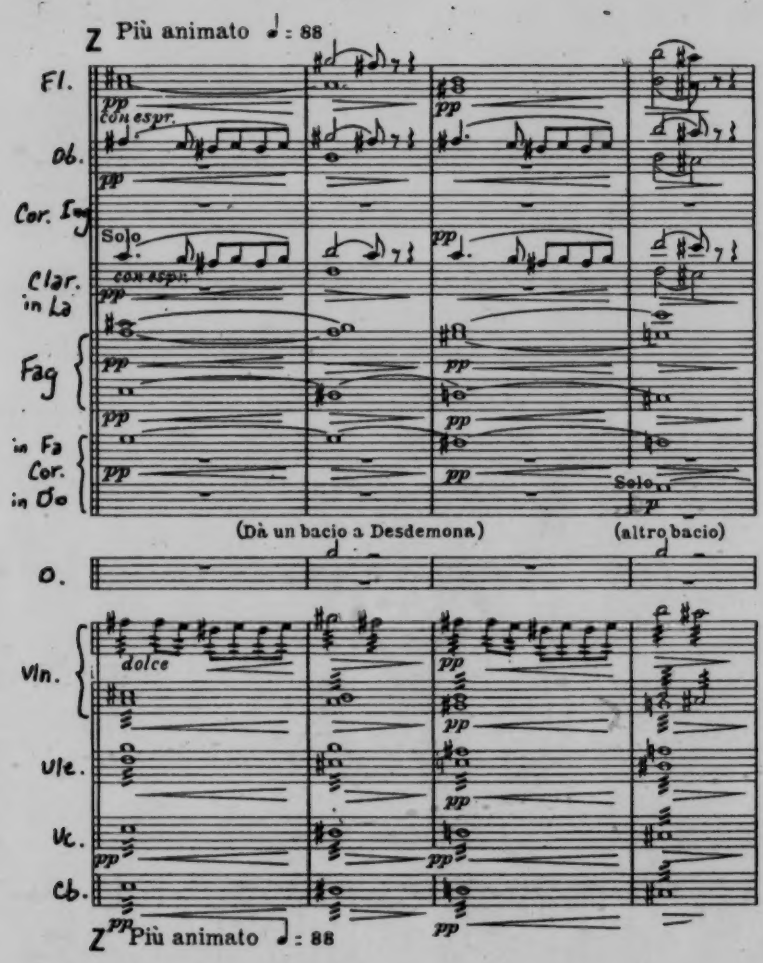
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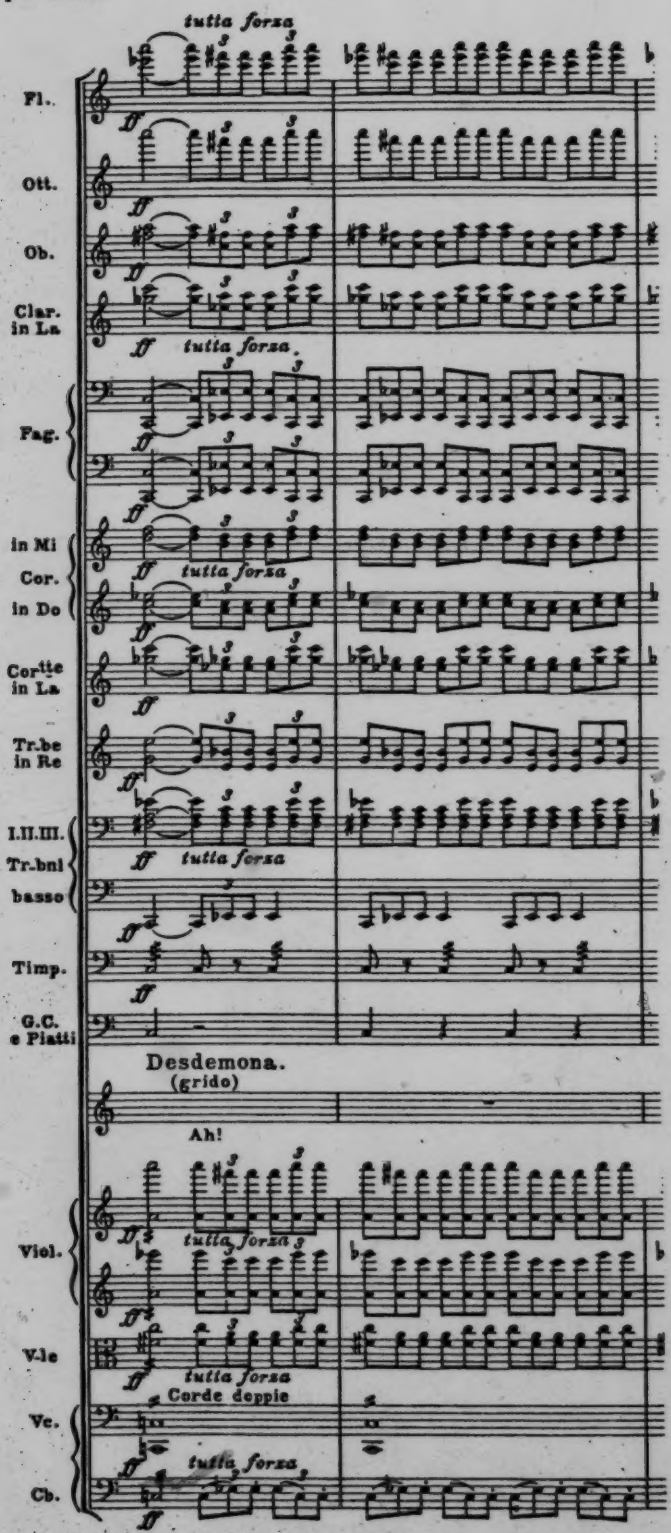
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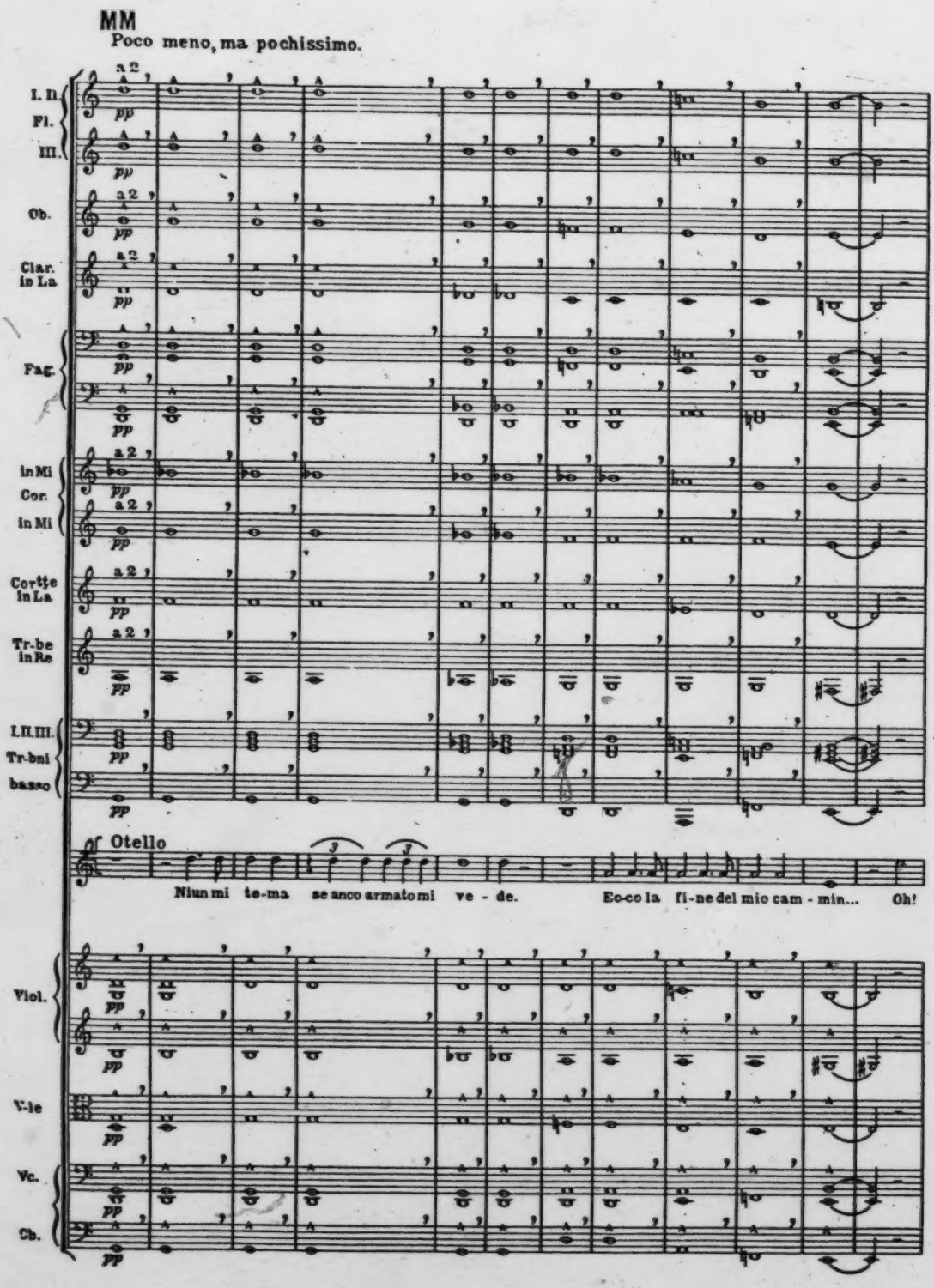

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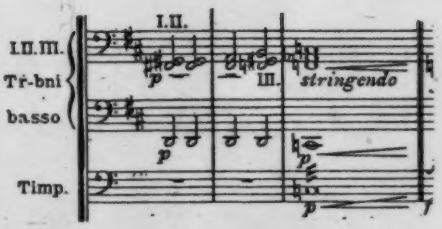
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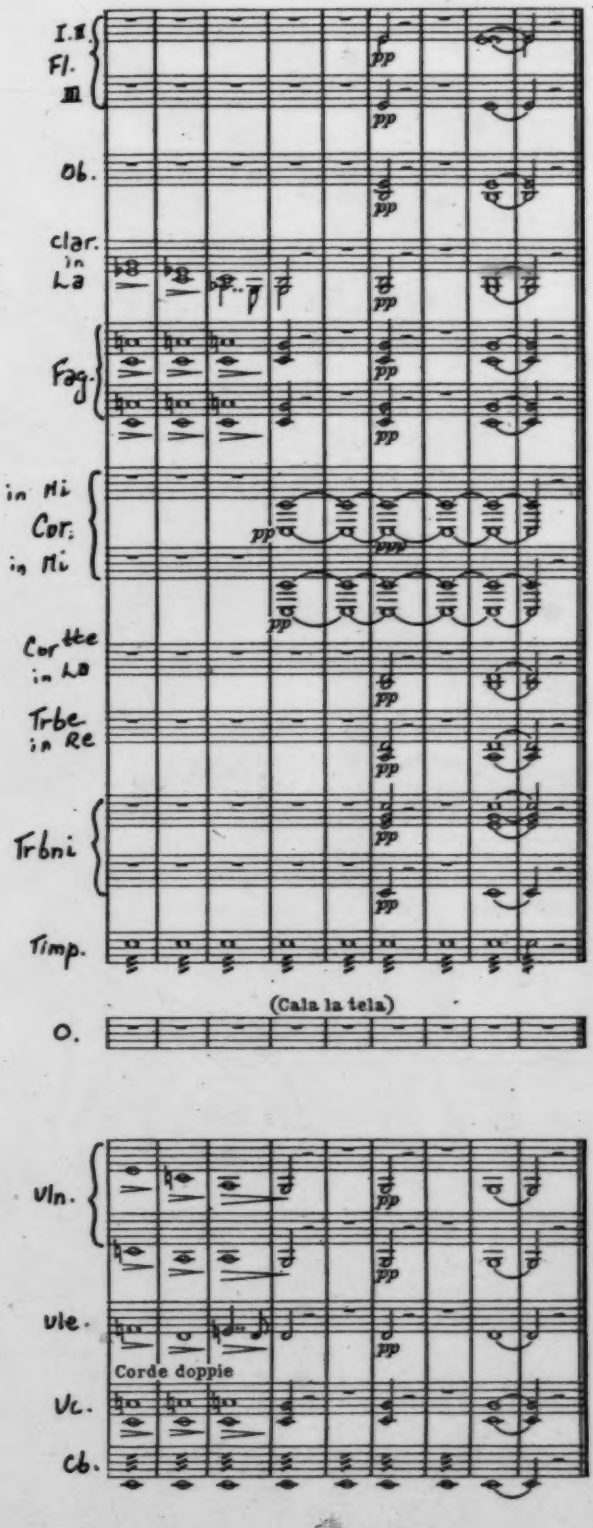
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_____. Ernani. Full Orchestral Score.

_____. Un Giorno di Regno. Full Orchestral Score.

_____. Giovanna d'Arco. Full Orchestral Score.

_____. Il Lombardi alla Prima Crociata. Full Orchestral Score.

_____. Luisa Miller. Full Orchestral Score.

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_____. I Masnadieri. Full Orchestral Score.

_____. Nabucco. Full Orchestral Score.

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APPENDIX A

INSTRUMENTATIONS OF VERDI'S OPERAS

Oberto, Conte di San Bonafacio fl: 2 (piccolo), ob: 2, cl: 2 bsn: 2, hn: 4, tpt: 2, trb: 3, cimbasso: 1, timp: 1, bass drum, triangle, strings.

Un Giorno di Regno fl: 2 (piccolo), ob: 2, cl: 2, bsn: 2, hn: 4, tpt: 2, trb: 3, cimbasso: 1, timp: 1, bass drum, triangle, snare drum, continuo, strings.

Nabucco fl: 2 (piccolo), ob: 2 (English horn), cl: 2, bsn: 2, hn: 4, tpt: 2, trb: 3, cimbasso: 1, timp: 1, harp: 2, bass drum, triangle, snare drum, banda, strings.

I Lombardi alla Prima Crociata fl: 2 (piccolo), ob: 2, cl: 2, bsn: 2, hn: 4, tpt: 2, trb: 3, cimbasso: 1, timp: 1, harp: 2, bass drum, snare drum, banda, strings.

Ernani fl: 2 (piccolo), ob: 2 (English horn), cl: 2, bs cl: 1, bsn: 2, hn: 4, tpt: 2, trb: 3, cimbasso: 1, timp: 1, harp: 1, bass drum, banda, strings, 6 trumpets backstage.

I Due Foscari fl: 2 (piccolo), ob: 2 (English horn), cl: 2, bsn: 2, hn: 4, tpt: 2, trb: 3, cimbasso: 1, timp: 1, harp: 1, bass drum, banda, strings.

Giovanna d'Arco fl: 2 (piccolo), ob: 2 (English horn), cl: 2, bsn: 2, hn: 4, tpt: 2, trb: 3, cimbasso: 1, timp: 1, harp: 1, bass drum, snare drum, chimes, banda, strings, harmonium, accordion, and triangle backstage.

Alzira fl: 2 (piccolo), ob: 2 (English horn), cl: 2, bsn: 2, hn: 4, tpt: 2, trb: 3, cimbasso: 1, timp: 1, harp: 1, bass drum, snare drum, cymbals, triangle, banda, strings.

Attila fl: 2 (piccolo), ob: 2 (English horn), cl: 2, bsn: 2, hn: 4, tpt: 2, trb: 3, cimbasso: 1, timp: 1, harp: 1, bass drum, snare drum, cymbals, banda, strings.

I Masnadieri fl: 2 (piccolo), ob: 2, cl: 2, bsn: 2, hn: 4, tpt: 2, trb: 3, cimbasso: 1, timp: 1, harp: 1, bass drum, strings.

Il Corsaro fl: 2 (piccolo), ob: 2, cl: 2, bsn: 2, hn: 4, tpt: 2, trb: 3, cimbasso: 1, timp: 1, harp: 1, bass drum, snare drum, banda, strings.

La Battaglia di Legnano fl: 2 (piccolo), ob: 2, cl: 2, bsn: 2, hn: 4, tpt: 2, trb: 3, cimbasso: 1, timp: 1, bass drum, cymbals, banda, strings.

Luisa Miller fl: 2 (piccolo), ob: 2, cl: 2, bsn: 2, hn: 4, tpt: 2, trb: 3, cimbasso: 1, timp: 1, bass drum, strings, organ, chimes backstage.

Rigoletto fl: 2 (piccolo), ob: 2 (English horn), cl: 2, bsn: 2, hn: 4, tpt: 2, trb: 3, cimbasso: 1, timp: 1, bass drum, chime, banda, strings.

Il Trovatore fl: 2 (piccolo), ob: 2, cl: 2, bsn: 2, hn: 4, tpt: 2, trb: 3, cimbasso: 1, timp: 1, harp: 1, bass drum, triangle, chime, strings, organ backstage, anvils onstage.

La Traviata fl: 2 (piccolo), ob: 2, cl: 2, bsn: 2, hn: 4, tpt: 2, trb: 3, cimbasso: 1, timp: 1, harp: 1, bass drum, triangle, banda, strings, tambourines onstage.

I Vespri Siciliani fl: 2 (2 piccolos), ob: 2, cl: 2, bsn: 2, hn: 4, cornet: 2, tpt: 2, trb: 3, cimbasso: 1, timp: 1, bass drum, snare drum, chime, castanettes, strings.

Aroldo fl: 2 (piccolo), ob: 2 (English horn), cl: 2, bsn: 2, hn: 4, tpt: 2, trb: 3, combasso: 1, timp: 1, bass drum, snare drum, banda, strings.

Un Ballo in Maschera fl: 2 (piccolo), ob: 2 (English horn), cl: 2, bsn: 2, hn: 4, tpt: 2, trb: 3, cimbasso: 1, timp: 1, harp: 1, bass drum, triangle, cymbals, chime, banda, strings.

Macbeth fl: 2 (piccolo), ob: 2 (English horn), cl: 2 (bs cl), bsn: 2, hn: 4, tpt: 2, trb: 3, cimbasso: 1, timp: 1, harp: 1, bass drum, chime, banda, strings, 2 oboes, 6 clarinets, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon beneath the stage, 4 trumpets backstage.

La Forza del Destino fl: 2 (piccolo), ob: 2, cl: 2, bsn: 2, hn: 4, tpt: 2, trb: 3, cimbasso: 1, timp: 1, harp: 2, bass drum, strings, 6 trumpets, organ backstage, 2 snare drums onstage.

Aida fl: 3 (piccolo), ob: 2, English horn: 1, cl: 2, bs cl: 1, bsn: 2, hn: 4, tpt: 2, trb: 3, cimbasso: 1, timp: 1, harp: 2, bass drum, cymbals, triangle, gong, banda, strings, 6 Egyptian trumpets onstage, 4 trumpets, 4 trombones, bass drum beneath the stage.

Simon Boccanegra fl: 2 (piccolo), ob: 2, cl: 2 (bs cl), bsn: 2, hn: 4, tpt: 2, trb: 3, cimbasso: 1, timp: 1, harp: 1, bass drum, banda, strings, 2 offstage snare drums, 1 trumpet, chimes backstage.

Don Carlo fl: 3 (piccolo), ob: 2 (English horn), cl: 2, bsn: 4 (contrabassoon), hn: 4, cornet: 2, tpt: 2, trb: 3, ophicleide, timp: 1, harp: 2, bass drum, triangle, cymbals, chime, banda, strings, harmonium, 5 horns backstage.

Otello fl: 3 (piccolo), ob: 2, English horn: 1, cl: 2, bs cl: 1, bsn: 4, hn: 4, cornet: 2, tpt: 2, trb: 3, cimbasso: 1, timp: 1, harp: 2, bass drum: 2, cymbals, gong, banda, strings, cornamusa, mandolins, guitars, organ, 6 trumpets, 4 trombones backstage.

Falstaff fl: 3 (piccolo), ob: 2, English horn: 1, cl: 2, bs cl: 1, bsn: 2, hn: 4, tpt: 3, trb: 3, cimbasso: 1, timp: 1, harp: 1, bass drum, triangle, cymbals, chime, strings, guitar, natural horn backstage.

APPENDIX B

GIUSEPPE FORTUNINO FRANCESCO VERDI: A BIOGRAPHICAL SURVEY

1813 - was born in the village of Le Roncole, Italy, near Busseto in the district of Parma, to Carlo and Luigia Verdi—October 10.

1820 - began musical studies under Pietro Baistrocchi, organist of the church at Le Roncole.

1823 - started formal education at the Ginnasio in Busseto—November.
- while in Busseto was taken under the wing of Antonio Barezzi, a prosperous merchant and founder of the local Philharmonic Society.

1825 - through Barezzi's influence, began studies in composition under Ferdinando Provesi, director of the Busseto Municipal Music School.

1829 - became Provesi's assistant, teaching at the school, playing the organ, copying parts for the Philharmonic, conducting rehearsals, and appearing as pianist in concerts.

1832 - financially supported by Barezzi, applied for entrance to the Milan Conservatory.
- application was denied because Verdi was over the normal age of admission.
- stayed in Milan and studied counterpoint and composition privately with Vincenzo Lavigna.

1835 - with Provesi's death, Verdi was named municipal *maestro di musica* of Busseto in October.

1836 - married Barezzi's daughter, Margherita, in Busseto on May 4.
- in September, completed his first opera, *Rocester*, but no production was given.

1837 - on March 26, daughter, Virginia, was born.
- completed a reworked version of *Rocester* titled *Oberto, Conte di Bonifacio*.

1838 - son, Romano (Icilio), was born at Busseto on July 11.
- resigned his post as *maestro di musica* and moved to Milan.
- on August 12, his daughter died of an unknown childhood disease.

1839 - son died, again of undetermined causes, on October 22.
- through the encouragement of a young soprano, Giuseppina Strepponi, Oberto, Conte di Bonifacio was given its premiere at La Scala, Milan, on November 17 to fair success.
- in December, the director of La Scala, Bartalomeo Merelli, contracted Verdi to compose three more works for the theater.

1840 - Margherita Verdi died on June 18.
- Un Giorno di Regno premiered at La Scala on September 5 to poor reception.
- depressed, Verdi decided to retire from composition and convinced Merelli to release him from his contract.

1841 - in October, Merelli persuaded Verdi to return to work.

1842 - Nabucco was presented for the first time, at La Scala on March 9 to overwhelming response.
- Verdi's reputation spread throughout Europe.

1843 - I Lombardi alla Prima Crociata, Milan—February 11.

1844 - Ernani, Venice--March 9.
- I Due Foscari, Rome—November 3.

1845 - Giovanna d'Arco, Milan—February 15.
- Alzira, Naples—August 12.

1846 - Attila, Venice--March 17.

1847 - first performance of a Verdi opera in America at Palmo's Opera House, New York—I Lombardi alla Prima Crociata on March 3.
- Macbeth, Florence—March 14.
- I Masnadieri, London—July 22.
- Jerusaléme, a French reworking of Lombardi for the Paris Opera—November 26.

1848 - Italian uprising against the Austrians in Milan.
- took up permanent residence in Paris.
- Il Corsaro, Lucca—February 12.

1849 - La Battaglia di Legnano, Rome—January 27.
- in August, Verdi returned to take up residence in Busseto.
- Luisa Miller, Naples—December 8.

1850 - began his love affair with soprano Giuseppina Strepponi, who moved in with him.
- Stiffelio, Trieste—November 16.

1851 - Rigoletto, Venice—March 11.

1852 - purchased estate at Sant'Agata and moved from Busseto.

1853 - Il Trovatore, Rome—January 19.
- La Traviata, Venice—March 6.
- with Strepponi, took up temporary residence in Paris to work on a commission.

1855 - Les Vêpres Siciliennes, Paris—June 13.

1857 - Simon Boccanegra, Venice—March 12.
- Aroldo, a reworking of Stiffelio, Rimini—August 16.

1858 - Un Ballo in Maschera, Rome—February 17.

1859 - married Giuseppina Strepponi—August 29.[1]

1860 - Italian Risorgimento—Austrians were driven from Italy.
- Verdi became Busseto's first representative in the United Italian parliament.

1862 - composed patriotic cantata Inno delle nazioni to a text by Arrigo Boito.
- La Forza del Destino, St. Petersburg, Russia—November 10.

1865 - Macbeth, revised version in French, Paris—April 21.

1867 - Don Carlo, Paris—March 11.

1868 - death of Rossini—November 13.
- Verdi proposed a collaborative Requiem and composed a Libera Me as his contribution.
- the project is aborted.

1869 - La Forza del Destino, revised version, Milan—February 17.

1871 - Aida, Cairo—December 24.

1873 - String Quartet in E minor composed in March.
- Alessandro Manzoni, Italian writer and patriot, died in Milan—May 22.

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[1] Toye, Walker, Gatti and others give the marriage date as April 29, 1859. This is due to a mistake in the copy of the registry at Villanova d'Arda indicated by Verdi in a letter to Piroli dated April 17, 1869. See Cesari and Luzio, I Copialettere, p. 284.

1874 - Requiem in memory of Manzoni in which Verdi incorporated the Libera Me from the proposed Requiem for Rossini—first performed in Milan on May 22.

1880 - Pater Noster and Ave Maria for the Milan Orchestral Society.

1881 - Simon Boccanegra, revised version, Milan—March 24.

1884 - Don Carlo, shortened and revised Italian version, Milan—January 10.

1887 - Otello, Milan—February 5.

1889 - Ave Maria (Quattro Pezzi Sacri)

1893 - Falstaff, Milan—February 9.

1897 - Giuseppina Verdi died at Sant'Agata on November 14.

1898 - established Casa di Riposo di Giuseppe Verdi, a home for aged musicians in Milan.
- Stabat Mater, Te Deum, and Laudi alla Vergine Maria of Quattro Pezzi Sacri.

1901 - suffered stroke while visiting in Milan—January 21.
- died six days later at his residence at the Albergo Milano—January 27.

APPENDIX C

SYNOPSIS OF OTELLO

ACT I

As a tempest rages in the harbor of Cyprus, citizens await the return of their governor, Otello, a Moorish general in the Venetian army. When his ship is sighted, the Cypriots call on heaven to spare it. Safely in port, Otello stops on the ramparts to proclaim victory over the Turks ("Esultate!") and then enters his castle. His ensign, Iago, angered because a rival, Cassio, has been promoted to captain, plots his own advancement by fanning the secret desires of Roderigo for Otello's wife, Desdemona. Meanwhile, the Cypriots gather around a bonfire. Iago, leading a drinking song (Brindisi: "Inaffia l'ugola"), forces the easily intoxicated Cassio to drink toasts to Otello and his bride; the ensign next provokes Roderigo to duel with the reeling Cassio. Otello's predecessor, Montano, tries to intervene but is wounded by Cassio. Suddenly Otello, awakened by the brawl, storms out to demand an explanation; Iago pretends ignorance. As Desdemona joins her husband, he demotes Cassio and instructs Iago to restore peace. Otello and Desdemona, left alone in the moonlight, tenderly recall their courtship ("Già nella notte densa"), and they kiss.

ACT II

By the castle garden, Iago advises Cassio to seek Desdemona's aid in regaining Otello's favor. Cassio goes off, leaving Iago to

describe his view of his creator; a cruel demon who gives him ideas for his evil machinations ("Credo"). On Otello's arrival, the ensign makes innuendos about Desdemona's fidelity as they spy her in the garden with Emilia (Iago's wife) and Cassio; he warns the Moor to beware of jealousy. Women, children and sailors bring flowers to Desdemona, whose beauty softens Otello's suspicions. However, when she approaches him about Cassio's reinstatement he grows irritable. Fearing he is ill, she tries to soothe his brow with a handkerchief, which he throws to the ground. Desdemona, confused, pleads her devotion, while Iago wrenches the handkerchief from Emilia, who has retrieved it. When the women leave, Otello accuses his ensign of destroying his peace of mind. Iago answers the Moor's demands for proof by pretending he has heard Cassio murmur Desdemona's name in his sleep ("Era la notte"); even worse, he says he saw in Cassio's hand the handkerchief Otello had given her when he first courted her. Seconded by Iago, Otello vows vengeance ("Si, pel ciel").

ACT III

In the armory, Iago tells Otello that more proof is forthcoming and then departs as Desdemona greets her husband ("Dio ti giocondi"). The Moor hints at his suspicions, but she fails to understand; when he demands the handkerchief he once gave her, she again pleads for Cassio, driving Otello to call her a courtesan. Though Desdemona, in tears, swears her innocence, the Moor sends her away. Spent with rage, he muses on his misery ("Dio mi potevi

scagliar"), then hides at the approach of Cassio and Iago. The ensign, flashing the handkerchief he stole, manipulates Cassio's banter about his mistress, Bianca, so that Otello thinks they mean Desdemona. Cassio leaves as trumpets announce dignitaries from Venice. Otello vows to kill his wife.

In the great hall of the castle, the court enters to welcome Lodovico, the ambassador, who presents papers recalling Otello to Venice and naming Cassio governor. When Cassio steps forward, Otello loses self-control and, cursing Desdemona, hurls her to the floor. She begs forgiveness for her supposed crime; the courtiers try to console her, but Otello orders them all out. As the Moor falls unconscious in a fit, Iago mockingly salutes the "Lion of Venice."

ACT IV

In her room, as Emilia helps prepare her for bed, Desdemona sings a song about a maiden, Barbara, who has been forsaken by her lover (Willow Song: "Salce, salce"). Startled by the wind, she bids her friend good night, says her prayers ("Ave Maria") and retires. Otello soon steals in and tenderly kisses her. When she awakens, he tells her to prepare for death; though she protests her innocence, he smothers her. Suddenly Emilia knocks with news that Cassio has slain Roderigo. Hearing Desdemona's death moan, she cries for help, bringing Iago, Lodovico and Cassio. As Emilia tells of Iago's treachery, the villain rushes out of the room.

Otello, realizing he has been duped ("Niun mi tema"), stabs himself and dies upon a kiss.